

Page 14
Page 15
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Wednesday February 28 1996

Algeria D 8.50	Hong Kong HK\$ 25	Poland Z 5.70
Andorra FF 10	Hungary F 200	Portugal E 200
Austria S 28	India IN 50	Qatar QR 10
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Greece D 300	Oman O 1.00	

The Guardian

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INTERNATIONAL
NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR
48,487

The pilot who turned the tables on Little Havana

Faithful to Fidel

Guardian 2 with European weather



Parents

Children lost to cults

G2 pages 4/5

Society

A terrible kind of beauty in this not-so-pleasant land

G2 pages 10/11



Major moves to kickstart Irish talks

Michael White and David Sharrock

JOHAN Major and John Bruton will meet in London today to launch their latest drive to revive the Northern Ireland peace process by naming a date for all-party talks — but only after elections whose format is creating huge tensions between the province's politicians.

The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach spoke by telephone last night to finalise details for today's brief summit. The breakthrough came as the row between the nine Official Ulster Unionist MPs and ministers at the Northern Ireland Office over Monday night's vote on the Scott report flared to a dangerous level.

In an extraordinary running battle on the airwaves, John Major and his senior colleagues insisted that "there is no deal, not now, not yesterday, not tomorrow, not at all" with the Unionists — or any of its rivals — over the peace process in return for support in fighting off Labour's attack in the arms-to-Iraq affair.

The row overshadowed renewed optimism that the peace process can be kickstarted into life via early elections and a restored IRA ceasefire, thanks to flexibility between the two governments.

Official Dublin sources said Mr Major had now agreed to their proposals for Dayton-style proximity talks, in which all the parties will meet under the same roof but not necessarily around the same table to clear the way for full negotiations. These will be called "intensive multilateral discussions" and Dublin is pushing for a start and finish date.

Dublin continued to insist that a specific date for such talks must form part of any Anglo-Irish communique. The Prime Minister's office confirmed that that was Mr Major's wish.

Sinn Fein warned that unless the date came well before the sectarian "marching season" in June, a renewed

Poll highlights

- Despite the bombs 46% of Britons think the peace process is still continuing
- They put 58% of the blame for the breakdown of the peace process on the IRA, 20% on the Government
- Half the population thinks Gerry Adams knows the IRA want ending its ceasefire, only a quarter believes he doesn't
- 60% of Catholics want Northern Ireland to retain some kind of link with Britain
- 57% of Catholics think the border "does not matter and is not worth arguing about"
- Nearly a third of Britons think Northern Ireland should become an independent country

Public backs compromise

Martin Linton

THE British government can rely on strong public support if it takes a more flexible approach to the IRA in the Irish peace talks, according to a joint Guardian-Irish Times poll published today.

Although most people blame the IRA for the breakdown of the peace process, many of them think the British government should make the first move towards its resumption by setting an early date for all-party talks.

Only one precondition — the resumption of the IRA

ceasefire — would be demanded by a majority in Britain, Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, which were polled simultaneously over the weekend.

Most British voters would also insist on an IRA commitment to the gradual decommissioning of weapons as the talks progressed. But even Northern Irish Protestants do not think the British government need demand the total decommissioning of all IRA weapons before talks start.

Despite the resumption of IRA violence, only 10 per cent of British voters think the peace process is "halted for good", a third think it is "stalled at present" but nearly half say it is "still continuing".

Details, page 5

ceasefire — Sinn Fein's de facto passport to the talks — will be difficult to secure.

But John Hume, leader of the nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party, who saw Mr Major in mid-morning, sounded cheerier — not least because the public row with the Unionists looked, to all but the most suspicious MPs, like proof of the "no deals" pledge.

Before the date for all-party talks — the goal which eluded 17 months of IRA ceasefire — is reached, the "intensive multilateral discussions" would be used to decide upon which form Northern Ireland

elections would take.

Each party's preferred formula increases its own chances of success, hence the tactical alliance between the SDLP and Democratic Unionist Party for a list system in which the whole province would be one constituency.

Mr Trimble wants each of Northern Ireland's 18 constituencies to elect five members to a 90-seat assembly.

The version finally chosen would affect the timetable. Unionists claim the Hume-Paisley "list" plan would require months of preparation. Mr Hume's all-Ireland referendum scheme is also under discussion.

Unionists are stressing the need for parties to accept the six "Mitchell principles" which renounce using violence. They fear Dublin will want to water them down to make it easier for Sinn Fein.

Yesterday, Mr Bruton told the Daily that the views of the two governments were converging on agreeing a date for all-party talks.

Sinn Fein's president, Gerry Adams, called for "clear, unambiguous public assurances" for a firm date "without any preconditions".

Last night Mr Paisley said of talks including Sinn Fein: "There would be more absences than ever, because the

British government would not go, the Dublin government could not go, and we certainly wouldn't."

Mr Trimble spent much of the day denying that any horse-trading between his party and the Government had taken place before the debate on the Scott report.

The Ulster Unionist decision to vote with Labour prompted highly-placed accusations that the Unionist leader had been rebuffed in his "clandestine" attempts to trade votes on Scott for concessions on the peace process.

Scarcely concealing his contempt for the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, and his deputy, Michael Ancram, Mr Trimble accused them of "pure invention" in trying to cover up their own attempted deals with Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party over the electoral system for the proposed forum.

He remained courteous towards Mr Major even as he dismissed claims that his chief whip, Martin Smith, had offered to sustain the Government's fragile two-vote majority for its last 12 months in office in return for sympathetic treatment.

In the future, Labour is also likely to tackle the practice of unions — notably Unison — directly funding the work and salaries of front-bench researchers. The unions will probably be asked to place the money into a central fund for distribution to the front bench by the party, so reducing claims that unions are directing the policy work of front-benchers.

Green credentials, page 4; Leader comment, page 8



Pat Buchanan, the Republican front runner with Bob Dole for the latest US primary in Arizona, makes the most of a photo opportunity at the OK Corral in Tombstone yesterday. KO'd at the OK Corral, page 2 PHOTOGRAPH: ERIC DRAPER

Austin

WE MAY HAVE SHIP OURSELVES IN THE KNOX OVER THE...

Scott aftermath, page 5; Letters, page 8

she was told, plus 10 per cent of the amount she had mislaid.

"I was astonished," Ms Jeffers said last night. "This smacks of theft. Nothing justifies the unauthorised removal of money from a private and confidential personal belonging."

Railtrack last night confirmed that it takes the handling charge and a 10 per cent levy of lost money over £50, with a ceiling of £10.

Before Railtrack took over running the network, British Rail used to charge a nominal sum, usually less than £2, for handing back lost property.

A Railtrack spokesman said last night it would apologise to Ms Jeffers because the wrong procedures were followed. The correct procedure would have been to take all the money, put it in the bank, and give her a cheque for the amount due to her after the deductions.

Ms Jeffers, a student from Wimbledon, south London, said the charges were "arbitrary in the extreme."

She has complained to the rail regulator, John Swift. His office said a code of practice was being drawn up which would ensure that charges for return of property were well publicised.

When Morine Jeffers found her purse was missing on a train journey from London to Reading, she rang Paddington station and was relieved to hear it was waiting for her in lost property — she had left it at the ticket office by mistake.

But when she arrived to collect it three days later, she got a nasty shock: Railtrack employees had, without her knowledge, removed £2.50 of the £75 in the purse. The removal covered a £2 handling charge.

Morine Jeffers... shocked by Railtrack 'theft' of money

Blair to end union sponsorship

Patrick Wintour
Chief Political Correspondent

ONE of the chief remaining historic links between the Labour Party and the unions is to be severed today when the party's national executive is expected to agree to end union sponsorship of MPs and parliamentary candidates.

The move is part of reforms prompted by the Nolan Committee's call to reduce paid outside influence on MPs.

Nearly 150 of the 230 Labour MPs are sponsored, including the Labour leader, Tony Blair, and the shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown.

The national executive will decide that unions should no longer explicitly sponsor individual MPs, parliamentary candidates or would-be candidates, but instead sponsor constituency parties.

The change, first touted by Mr Blair six months ago, has been delicately negotiated with the unions and most of

Shadow cabinet's cash support

- Tony Blair: sponsored by Transport and General Workers Union;
 - John Prescott: sponsored by RMT;
 - Clare Short: Union pays £500 per year to constituency, £2,100 election expenses, £25,000 per year for researcher;
 - David Blunkett: Union pays 40 per cent of election expenses;
 - Gordon Brown: sponsored by TGWU;
 - Robin Cook: sponsored by them now support the reform.
- A potential candidate sponsored by a union arguably had an advantage over rivals in any parliamentary selection, since the constituency knew he or she could bring union financial backing.
- The new procedure will mean that unions are not able directly to back their favoured candidate before winning a constituency selection, but will instead support the constituency itself, after the selection is made.
- The Labour leadership hopes the reform will deprive the Conservatives of the accusation that Labour MPs are creatures of their union.
- MPs first received contributions from unions towards the expenses of their electoral organisations, and maintenance payments, at a time when no official salaries were paid. But as MPs' salaries

have risen, the relative value of union support has fallen.

Under the current rules, first established in 1933 and last revised in 1979, unions cannot pay more than 60 per cent of the election expenses of an MP, or more than £600 per year to a constituency party. Between the 1950s and 1970s, around a quarter of all Labour candidates were sponsored, but Labour hopes the new rules will encourage unions to sponsor marginal seats, rather than MPs in safe Labour seats, which is the current pattern.

In the future, Labour is also likely to tackle the practice of unions — notably Unison — directly funding the work and salaries of front-bench researchers. The unions will probably be asked to place the money into a central fund for distribution to the front bench by the party, so reducing claims that unions are directing the policy work of front-benchers.

Green credentials, page 4; Leader comment, page 8

Making a pig's ear out of a lost purse

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

WHEN Morine Jeffers found her purse was missing on a train journey from London to Reading, she rang Paddington station and was relieved to hear it was waiting for her in lost property — she had left it at the ticket office by mistake.

But when she arrived to collect it three days later, she got a nasty shock: Railtrack employees had, without her knowledge, removed £2.50 of the £75 in the purse. The removal covered a £2 handling charge.

Morine Jeffers... shocked by Railtrack 'theft' of money

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Inside

News 2
Letters 8
Comment 9
Obituaries 10
Financial news 11

G2

Parents 4
Wheat's World 7
Style 8
Society 10
Arts 12

Quick Crossword 15
Cartoons 15
Radio 16
Television 16
Weather 16



MP fights Guardian 'insult'

Sarah Bosley

A LABOUR MP told the High Court yesterday he was offended by a Parliamentary sketch in the Guardian in February last year which alleged he had foul-mouthed a broadcaster in Soho, instead of apologising after accidentally bumping into him.

George Howarth, MP for Knowsley North and shadow home affairs minister, denies the incident ever took place. He claims the article, by Simon Hoggart, caused him grave embarrassment and greatly injured his reputation.

On the opening day of his libel action against Guardian Newspapers Ltd, it was claimed the article would lead readers to believe Mr Howarth was "horrid, foul-mouthed and uncivilised and/or a drunkard and not an appropriate person to be a shadow minister."

The Guardian denies that the article could be so interpreted, but claims that even if the words do bear that meaning, they are true.

Mr Howarth told the court he rarely went to Soho and had never met Fritz Spiegl, the Merseyside, Liverpool, musician and writer whom he is alleged to have knocked into. Mr Spiegl wrote about his encounter with an unnamed Merseyside MP in the Liverpool Daily Post, and sent a copy to Mr Hoggart.

Writing about a Commons debate on Sunday pub opening for which Mr Howarth was a Labour spokesman, Mr Hoggart used Mr Spiegl's description of the incident, but named the MP.

Mr Howarth told the court: "I feel very offended... it never happened, and to make out that I'm the sort of person who goes wandering around the streets shouting abuse... it is out of character."

In justification, the Guardian cites other incidents. It claims the MP punched Mail on Sunday journalist Alan Cochrane on one occasion in a Commons bar. Mr Howarth said he had "had some words" with Mr Cochrane over an article about his sending his 11-year-old son to a school outside Knowsley borough.

But according to Mr Howarth, it was Mr Cochrane, "the worse for drink" who was the aggressor. "He came lunging at me shouting abusively," he told the court. He said he thought Mr Cochrane might strike him and put his hand up, "I think it may have caught him," he said.

Mr Howarth admits writing to Guardian columnist Edward Pearce, objecting to comments about "winging Liverpoolians", but he denied taking on a postscript telling Mr Pearce he could "fuck off". The MP told the court he was making a joke to lighten the tone. "I put if you are not prepared to accept these arguments, you can asterisk, asterisk, asterisk off."

Counsel for the Guardian, Manuel Barca, reminded Mr Howarth that he had not taken offence over an earlier remark in a sketch by Mr Hoggart, that he looked "like a serial axe murderer". Mr Howarth had written a wry letter that was printed in the Guardian, warning that "appearances are not always deceptive".

Parliamentary sketch was "something ephemeral and fleeting and not to be taken too seriously," suggested Mr Barca. But when it came to a damaging allegation about an incident that would be allowed to advertise in newspapers and jackpot machines will be able to pay out thousands of pounds.



George Howarth... 'article caused embarrassment'

First night Exploration of the language of love

Michael Billington

All in the Timing Nottingham Playhouse

PUNT and Dennis, the TV comedy team, star in David Ives's All in the Timing at Nottingham Playhouse, six very, language-obsessed plays, seen Off-Broadway in 1994, which frequently invoke the name of Woody Allen. The difference is that Ives, lacking Allen's Borscht-belt, stand-up expertise, does not always go for the punch-line.

Inevitably some of Ives's half dozen are better than others. I warmed very much to Sure Thing which deals, in Ayckbournish fashion, with the different routes a café conversation between a man and a woman can take: how his reaction to her reading Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury can propel them towards social disaster or to the altar. Ives's ingenuity also surfaces in The Universal Language, in which teacher and pupil fall in love through exploring an Esperanto-like language.

Ives's forte is clearly a deep romanticism that emerges through the potential minefield of language. But, when heterosexual union is not at stake, he sometimes flags an idea to death. In Words, Words, Words, he swiftly demolishes the proposition that three monkeys typing into infinity could produce Hamlet

and then has nowhere to go. Even a playlet about Trotsky's spurious survival for 36 hours with a mountain climber's axe stuck in his head runs out of steam.

The one new piece in the collection, Degas - C'est Moi, confirms Ives is at his best when his cerebral and romantic instincts are battling it out. It is based on the Thurberish idea of an average New York guy imagining he is the great artist. Although finally disillusioned, he learns to accept the beauty of thumral reality through observing his girl friend's fluency of movement. What might simply have been an intellectual conceit turns into something quite touching through Ives's access of feeling.

Although the plays cry out for an all-American cast in an intimate space, director Hugh Woolridge does his best to cover up the culture-gap. Oddly, Steve Punt and Hugh Dennis rarely get the chance to work together. When they do the results are good, but the acting honours are taken by Debra Beaumont, especially as the earnest language student, and by Mabel Aitken as a sharp-tongued café-customer and a waitress.

Ives palpably has a talent; but the real test will come when he translates his Woody Allen-type tension between head and heart to the demands of a full-length play.

Theatre, G2 pages 12-13

Lottery pressure prompts deregulation of £800 million bingo industry



A long way from Dartford... Sharon Stone and friends in Casino, the latest hit film with a gambling theme

Gambling controls to be swept away

Thirteen towns added to list of Casino sites as bookies are allowed to advertise

Dan Atkinson

SWEEPING reforms planned for Britain's gambling laws propose a fundamental shift away from social controls and towards gambling on demand.

The £800 million bingo industry will be almost completely deregulated, bookies will be allowed to advertise in newspapers and jackpot machines will be able to pay out thousands of pounds.

Thirteen towns would be added to the current list of 53 areas in which casinos may be sited. They are Oxford, Slough, Peterborough, Swindon, Gloucester, Hastings, Ipswich, Croydon, Dartford, Redbridge, Folkestone, Morecambe and Weymouth.

The shake-up - announced by the Home Office yesterday - is already generating controversy. Junior minister Timothy Kirkhope said he would be looking at legalising inside-betting on the National Lottery. But the heritage department, fearing the loss of "good cause" money to bookmakers, said this "is something... we are adamant we do not want to see".

Meanwhile, parts of the industry were suggesting the proposed relaxation did not go far enough. Alan Goodenough, chief executive of the Ritz casino owner, London Clubs, said yesterday's partial shift towards regulating gambling as a commercial rather than a social phenomenon may prove unstoppable.

Shares in the bingo giant Rank Organisation jumped on the news, as did those of Bess, owner of the Coral bookmakers, Ladbroke and London Clubs.

The proposals, published nearly a year later than planned, represent a response to pressures on the British gaming industry, notably the impact of the National Lottery and competition from overseas gaming centres.

Mr Kirkhope said the measures were "a balanced package of reform" designed to update rules dating from the late 1960s. In a reference to the consensus of that time, he pledged: "Regulation will be maintained to ensure the industry stays crime free".

These proposals will go out for consultation until May 31.

The most radical measure is the effective severance of Britain's 970 bingo clubs from tough controls on the 119 casinos. The consultation paper described the game as a very

popular, low-risk form of gambling.

Under the plans, bingo sites will no longer have to form members-only clubs, and the 24-hour "cooling-off" period between joining and playing will be scrapped. Punters will be able to play on impulse.

All advertising restrictions would go, as would licensing justices' powers to refuse bingo licences on the grounds of "insufficient demand".

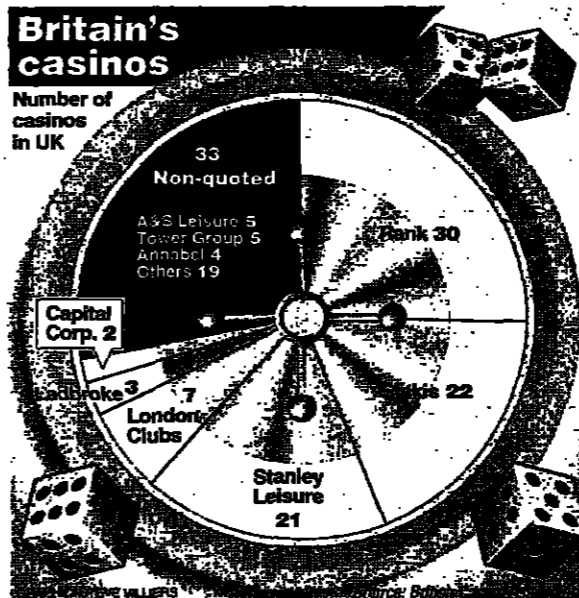
Limits on the extent to which operators can subsidise prizes would be scrapped, and the limit on national-game multiple bingo prizes.

For casinos, the package moves towards abolishing the members-only principle for "hard" gambling. The 48-hour "cooling-off" period is halved, and punters will be able to apply for membership by post, instead of in person.

The limit of six jackpot machines per club would be increased to 64, and the £250 jackpot prize limit either raised or abolished.

Licensing hours - currently limited to midnight - should be brought into line with those of nightclubs (2am, and 3am in central London), and limited advertising should be permitted in telephone directories and tourist guides.

Casinos and bingo clubs will be permitted to accept payment by debit but not credit cards.



Bingo Licensed bingo clubs, UK

Rank Organisation	Number of Casinos
Carlton	24
Walker	22
Cascade	21
Pontins	15

Gale (owned by Bess) 127

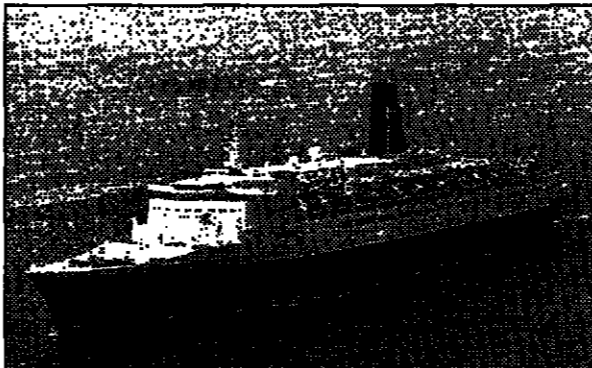
- London has just 14% of the country's casinos, but accounts for 70% of all money gambled.
- Half a million people play bingo every day.
- More than £800m is bet on bingo a year.

Trafalgar faces billion-pound takeover by Norwegian shipyards conglomerate

Roger Cowe on a new business challenge

THE QE2 and other remnants of the Trafalgar House empire are in danger of slipping into the hands of a Norwegian conglomerate in a potential billion-pound takeover.

Kvaerner, the Norwegian owner of shipyards, pulp and paper mills and oil interests, stressed yesterday that it would only go ahead with the agreement of Trafalgar's board. Two months ago the Norwegian com-



The QE2... reputation damaged by disastrous cruise

pany was given a bloody nose by shareholders of northern building company Amec, after only 10 per cent of them voted for a £360 million offer.

Trafalgar's directors will wait for a formal offer from Kvaerner, but their decision will be influenced by the interests of the Hong Kong-based Jardine empire. The Jardine subsidiary, Hongkong Land, owns a quarter of Trafalgar's



The Ritz... once a prize asset but sold last year for £75m

Despite his pedigree, Sir Nigel failed to capitalise on the 1980s free-for-all which saw the likes of Lord Hanson rocket to the top of the industrial pile. In 1991 Trafalgar bought Davy Corporation, a high-quality construction company fallen on hard times. But one of Davy's worst contracts, to build a North Sea oil rig, landed Trafalgar with huge losses and led to final disillusionment with Sir Nigel

and his second in command, Sir Eric Parker. Trafalgar was forced to ask shareholders for more money in the first of four share issues. They also opened the door to Hong Kong Land, the Jardine subsidiary, which snapped up 15 per cent of the company in October 1992.

Sir Nigel and Sir Eric soon gave way to Jardine appointees. Meanwhile, Cunard's reputation was

Big Pat KO'd at the OK Corral

Martin Walker in Tombstone, Arizona

LIKE an elderly legend of the old West suddenly facing a machine gun, Pat Buchanan, the protectionist Republican candidate, stood helpless in Tombstone's OK Corral yesterday as the forces of global capitalism deployed against him.

As Mr Buchanan posed with a Colt 45 and a gunslinger's snarl at the scene of the most famous shoot-out of the Wild West, the chairman of Senator Robert Dole's presidential campaign announced that Germany's BMW company was bringing 2,000 new jobs, with a \$250 million (£165 million) expansion, to South Carolina. The state's primary on Saturday is the next on the campaign trail.

"Pat Buchanan wants to put a tariff wall around America that would keep these good jobs out," warned the current and past governors of the state, co-chairmen of the Dole campaign, as Mr Buchanan's photo suddenly took on the funeral trappings of Boot Hill.

Opinion polls had the primary too close to call as the south-west state of Arizona went to the polls yesterday. A massive final television advertising blitz by the millionaire publisher Steve Forbes steam-rolled Mr Buchanan's far weaker television campaign.

Privately, Mr Buchanan's campaign staff fear that their expected small majority on polling day will be outweighed by the massive effort Mr Forbes put into getting absentee ballots in December and January, when he was riding high in the polls.

As the news of the BMW investment came in, Mr Buchanan snuffed a new conspiracy. He rallied against the European Union - "another arm of the New World Order" which, he said, was aimed at setting up a world government "to steal away the sovereignty of these United States. And I'm gonna take it back. Take it back, America."

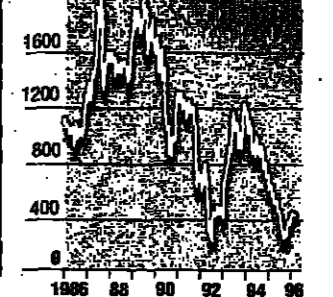
The visit to the OK Corral had been for a campaign gimmick. It is now a museum, where life-sized models of Wyatt Earp and his sheriff brother and the bandits they gunned down stand with revolvers drawn on the site of the gun battle on October 26, 1881.

One of the bandits was called Billy Clinton, and a little chalk transformed his name board to read "Billy Clinton", so Mr Buchanan could strike a glowing pose as a promoter in the November election.

But when Mr Buchanan then headed for the most famous of the Wild West burial grounds, on the small rise that overlooks the old mining town of Tombstone, he found it under new management. "Boot Hill Graveyard - and Jewish Memorial" - said the sign, deterring his caravan from its planned stop.

Trafalgar House

Stock market value (£m)



hit by the disastrous 1994 Christmas cruise of the QE2, which resulted in millions of pounds of damages to customers who found refitting work still continuing while they were at sea.

New chief executive Nigel Rich concentrated on shedding unwanted assets in an attempt to focus on international construction engineering which remains Trafalgar's most promising business.

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£1bn debt write-off for rail sale

Keith Harper and Alex Brummer

THE Government has agreed to write off £1 billion of Railtrack's notional £1.5 billion debt to make the company more attractive to potential investors and to prepare it for sale in May.

The deal has been confirmed in a letter from the Government to Bob Horton, Railtrack's chairman. It reveals that ministers have approved a debt reduction to £50 million, a deal which Mr Horton will regard as something of a victory.

The move was attacked by Labour's shadow transport secretary, Clare Short, as a "disgraceful and cynical move designed to keep the British public in the dark while the Government manipulates considerable public funds."

The £1.5 billion debt figure was arrived at by accountants preparing Railtrack for sale based on information gathered since it started operating in 1994.

The decision to write off the money is a serious climb-down after ministers, worried about being seen as too soft in previous privatisations, had held out for better terms.

As part of the deal, Mr Horton has had to agree to invest more than £500 million into the Thameslink 2000 project, joining services between north and south London. In a Commons announcement yesterday, the Transport Secretary, Sir George Young, said the project would quadruple existing services from six to 24 trains an hour in each direction.

Sir George said the Government would be expected to add about £100 million of the

£550 million cost. The centre-piece will be a new station at St Pancras adjoining the Channel Tunnel rail link terminal, the contract for which has been secured by a consortium including Richard Branson.

Mr Horton has been fighting an open battle with the Department of Transport to reduce Railtrack's debt. The £1 billion reduction will give Railtrack's balance sheet a more respectable look in the City and make its flotation go more smoothly, unless Labour comes out with a positive statement that a Labour government would re-nationalise Railtrack.

It also emerged yesterday that the Government has decided to sell the whole of Railtrack and not the 51 per cent which it is already committed. This would make it even more difficult for Labour to re-nationalise. Labour has been reluctant to reveal its plans for fear of being drawn into an argument about costs.

Sir George said that the Thameslink project would involve two new rail flyovers at New Cross and Bermondsey and rebuilding at existing stations.

It would also enhance links between Gatwick and Stansted airports, and create additional track and stations. Confirmation of Railtrack's involvement in the project, due to be ready in six years, came when Sir George indicated that it would carry out the "remaining infrastructure works" including development at St Pancras station.

Ms Short welcomed the announcement but said it had been delayed by at least five years and would cost the taxpayer much more because of privatisation.

City Notebook, page 11



'In the summertime I couldn't sit in my back garden because of the smell. We got big black flies buzzing over the fence all the time'

Frank Bray on Flossie the pig



Flossie the Vietnamese pot-bellied pig at the centre of the dispute between Paul Telford, and Frank Bray, above left

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: WILL WALKER

Pet pig causes stink between neighbours

Sally Weale

A LONG-RUNNING dispute between neighbours over Flossie, a 200lb Vietnamese pot-bellied pig, ended up in court yesterday after a couple claimed they had been driven out of their garden by the animal's stench.

Frank and Mary Bray had been looking forward to a quiet life when they moved into their semi-detached bungalow in Tyne south, Tyne-side, more than seven years ago with their more conventional pet, a Labrador-collie called Jet.

But soon after Paul Telford, a 35-year-old company director, moved in next door he began to complain about Jet's barking, Newcastle upon Tyne county court was told.

Mr Telford tape-recorded the dog then blasted the sound through the walls to annoy his neighbours. "It would go on for about 20 to 25 minutes and it would reset itself and start again 10 minutes later," Mr Bray told the court. "Once it went from 8pm to 7pm then came on again at 8.15pm until 2am the next day."

There were also complaints that the computer

firm boss revved his cars' engines, slammed doors and tinkered with his jet ski at all hours of the day and night. The noise was so bad, the Brays claimed, that ornaments fell from their shelves and cracks appeared in the walls.

But the crunch came when Mr Telford purchased Flossie. She was kept in an outhouse at the rear of the bungalow, free to roam the back garden which was allowed to become overgrown.

The court heard that a pig like Flossie can produce between three and four kilos of slurry every day, but Mr

Telford had made no proper arrangements to deal with the problem. Excrement and urine were allowed to lie around the garden, producing not only an appalling smell, but attracting flies, mice and rats, which invaded the Brays' garden.

Traps set by Mr Bray, aged 61, caught up to three dozen rodents. "In the summertime I couldn't sit in my back garden because of the smell," Mr Bray told the court. "We got big black flies buzzing over the fence all the time."

For four years he and his wife have been trying to sell up and move. Their once cherished bungalow is on the market for £69,950. "Unfortunately, no one will buy it because of Mr Telford," Mr Bray said. "That's what the estate agents have told me. I had three different estate agents — and two of them have given up on it."

Mr Bray, a retired factory inspector with a history of heart problems, has had a heart attack since launching his legal case. He claimed Mr Telford was waging a vendetta against him and had caused 75 per cent of his health problems.

Phillip Walling, acting for Mr Telford, said a doctor's report from the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle, described Mr Bray as having "quite an obsessive personality".

Mr Bray denied the charge. "I like things to be more correct than the average person," he conceded. "I wouldn't say I am obsessive. It comes from the profession I follow, being an inspector in engineering. Everything has to be minutely correct."

The hearing, in which the Brays are seeking damages and an order to stop Mr Telford being a nuisance, continues today.

Aitken apology over arms firm

David Hencke, Westminster Correspondent

JONATHAN AITKEN, the former chief secretary to the Treasury, has apologised to Parliament for failing to register a £10,000 directorship with Astra Defence Systems Ltd, the company being investigated for sending arms to Iran via Singapore.

He is the first MP to apologise to Parliament since the appointment of Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, as part of the Nolan Committee recommendations after the "cash for questions" scandals. He apologised directly to the Committee on Standards and Privileges.

The ruling by the commissioner is a fresh embarrassment for the Government, coming a day after it just survived a Commons vote over the Scott Report.

It is also unfortunate timing for Mr Aitken as he will next Wednesday be questioned by the Commons Trade and Industry Committee about his knowledge of the company's covert military exports to Iran while he was on the board from 1988 to 1990.

Sir Gordon has made his ruling following a complaint from Stephen Byers, Labour MP for Wallasey, that he should have declared his directorship when Astra changed its name from BMAC (British Manufacture and Research Company). Sir Gordon, after checking at Companies House, discovered there were two companies, registered as BMARC and Astra, during the period in question. He concluded after legal

advice that since at various times both companies used the name Astra, Mr Aitken broke the rules by failing to disclose the change of name which would have been used in business correspondence.

Mr Byers complained that Mr Aitken drew a distinction between the two companies to minimise the number of board meetings he attended at BMARC after the disclosures about the company's involvement in Project Lisi, a contract to supply naval guns to Singapore which ended up in Iran. He told the Times he had attended three BMARC meetings, but had attended five, two under the name Astra.

Mr Aitken says he had no intention to minimise his involvement, saying he had been approached by journalists late one evening about his involvement with BMARC. The Times asked only about his involvement with BMARC so his secretary had provided them only with diary dates of BMARC board meetings. He realised he should have included the Astra meetings after Mr Byers complained.

"At no time have I intentionally sought to draw a proper distinction between BMARC and Astra Defence Systems, neither have I made attempts to hide my attendance at board meetings."

Mr Byers said yesterday: "Jonathan Aitken drew a clear distinction between the two companies — a distinction he failed to make in the register."

Politics, page 5; Letters, page 8; Richard Shepherd, page 9

Innocent Briton dies in Russian mafia shooting

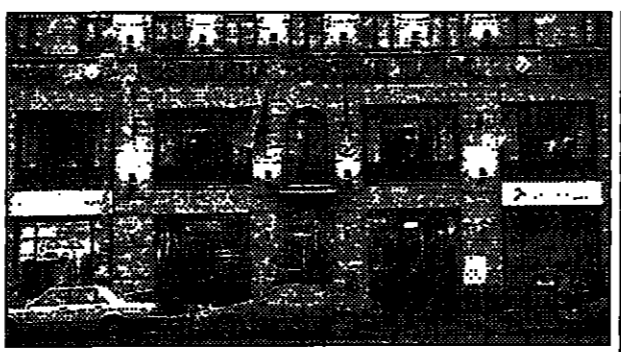
James Meek in Moscow, Duncan Campbell, and Yevgenia Borisova in St Petersburg

A BRITISH lawyer was among three people killed when Kalashnikov automatic rifles from under the coats and sprayed bullets at a group of men, killing two and seriously injuring a third. They escaped, leaving their weapons at the scene — a trademark of Russian hitmen.

Yesterday there were still bullet-holes in the cafe's windows but increased security at the hotel. The killing of a foreigner in such circumstances is seen as highly damaging to the city's attempts to establish itself as a business and tourism centre.

Two men walked into the cafe with coats over their arms, produced Kalashnikov automatic rifles from under the coats and sprayed bullets at a group of men, killing two and seriously injuring a third. They escaped, leaving their weapons at the scene — a trademark of Russian hitmen.

Mr Hyden, a Russian speaker who was married, had not been staying at the hotel and appeared to have simply stopped for a coffee before returning to Moscow. He is understood to have moved to



Murder scene... The city-centre Nevsky Palace Hotel

Russia in 1994 to work in business development. For the past fortnight he had been a consultant legal specialist working with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development on a water project.

A hotel spokeswoman, Natalia Belik, said: "We were proud that we had the reputation of one of the safest places in the city and we paid a lot of attention to keeping this image and protecting our

guests. But we are dependent on the situation in the city itself."

The other two men killed are understood to have been bodyguards of the intended victim, who was seriously injured and is under police guard in hospital. Police sources named him as Victor Gavrilin, a Russian businessman and a member of the Tambov criminal group named after the city south-east of Moscow.

Philip Dacker, the managing partner of the Edinburgh law firm Dundas and Wilson, for whom Mr Hyden worked until 1994, said last night: "We are all desperately sad to learn of the untimely death of John Hyden. He played a key role in the work undertaken by us in St Petersburg during his time here."

Assassinations of businessmen and gangsters, often reportedly over minor debts and territorial squabbles, have become common in Russia in recent years, particularly in Moscow and St Petersburg.

Murders run at the rate of about three a day in St Petersburg, a city of 5 million people. Police claim that they solve around 25 per cent of crimes involving foreigners.

Last year, a Briton was injured in a shooting incident in a popular restaurant on Novy Arbat, in the centre of Moscow. According to one version, the restaurant was through the restaurant after killing his victim in a back office, shouted at everyone to lie on the floor, but the British man did not understand Russian and was shot dead.

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Big Pat KO'd at the OK Corral

Blair puts environment centre stage

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent

TONY Blair promised yesterday to cut fuel bills and create 50,000 jobs through a scheme to improve energy efficiency, as one of his measures aimed at putting the environment at the centre of Labour's policy.

In his first speech on the environment since becoming party leader Mr Blair said Labour was planning a transport policy designed to encourage people to get out of their cars by offering attractive alternatives.

Among the proposals was a parliamentary environmental audit committee which would keep government policies constantly under review, and a commitment to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent by 2010 — a far tougher target than the Government's pledge of stabilisation by the year 2000.

Mr Blair's speech delighted environmental groups. Charles Secrett, director of Friends of the Earth, said: "It is heartening to hear the Labour leader has understood that environmental protection, a healthy economy and social justice go hand in hand."

Mr Blair, speaking at the Royal Society in London last night, made a pitch for the Labour Party to be seen as the natural home of environmentalists. "The essence of the left of centre is that it believes the individual prospers best within a strong, cohesive society, and that such a society has to be built around a sense of mutual responsibility.

"Our relations are not simply market based. They require social and moral principles to underpin them. This

is what the concept of stakeholding is all about — we have to balance the interests of all — not just the producer but the consumer, not just economic growth, but the environment... As everyone in society should have a stake in the economy, so we all have a stake in the health and integrity of the environment."

He chided the Government for failing to take action on global warming, saying that the ability to meet its current target was because of the switch from coal to gas and the serious recession. The energy efficiency scheme for homes, a new transport strategy encouraging the use of swift and environmentally friendly forms of transport, and a partnership with industry and business to drive down their emissions.

Labour would change that with 20 per cent carbon dioxide cuts by 2010. He promised a nationwide energy efficiency scheme for homes, a new transport strategy encouraging the use of swift and environmentally friendly forms of transport, and a partnership with industry and business to drive down their emissions.

Mr Blair said the party had to work constructively in Europe to ensure policies which did not destroy competitiveness.

He said environment versus jobs and environment versus competitiveness were outdated ideas. Most industrialised countries wasted energy and resources and produced far more pollution than was necessary for their level of economic activity.

Mr Blair said many good initiatives had been taken by local authorities to improve the environment. Labour would place a duty on them to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of their areas.

Leader comment, page 8



The late duke reviewing his private army, the Atholl Highlanders, on his estate in 1988. The militia was given semi-official status by Queen Victoria. PHOTOGRAPH: GLASGOW HERALD

South African inherits ancient Scots title

'Horried' peers, family clash, land signed away. Erend Clouston reports

AN ELDERLY South African land surveyor was last night digesting the news that he had inherited the 293-year-old dukedom of Atholl, complete with Europe's only private army and an apartment in a 13th century Highland castle.

The elevation of John Murray, aged 67, followed the death yesterday of his third cousin, George Ian Murray, the 10th duke, at the age of 64.

The news was received with dismay by Harold Brooks-Baker, publishing director of Burke's Peerage. "This points up the weaknesses in the peerage system," he said. "It is a sad day for the other dukes I have talked to — they are horrified."

Scotland was more relaxed about the prospect of a commoner succeeding to the country's sixth most senior title. "These things happen all the time, there's nothing unusual about it," said the Lord Lyon King of Arms, Sir Malcolm Laing of Edinburg.

Mr Murray has not been greatly enriched by his good



Blair castle: previous tenants include Mary Queen of Scots. PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MACLEOD

fortune. Two days ago it was revealed that the bachelor 10th duke, a former chairman of the Westminster Press group, had made over his ancestral home and virtually all of his 70,000 acres to a charitable trust "to preserve it for the people".

The revelation sparked speculation of a family falling-out, with Mr Murray depicted as the mercenary outsider punished for displaying

too commercial an attitude during an earlier inspection of the Murray's Perthshire seat. However, the estate's public relations team was stressing yesterday that relations between the two men had been good.

"There was no animosity," friction," a spokeswoman said. "The heir will be quite saddened to hear of the duke's death." Later she reported that Mr Murray, who has two

sons and a daughter, had sent his condolences.

The blood line that ties Blair Atholl to South Africa is so dilute as to be almost invisible. The 10th duke himself only succeeded to the title through convoluted family links with the third duke, who died in 1774. Inquiries have been hampered by the duke's reluctance to pass on information to genealogists.

"I assume it was because he

was so unprond of what was happening," said Mr Brooks-Baker. Nonetheless, a succession which dates back to a medieval Celtic earldom has always had a strong soap opera element. In 1746 the Jacobite Lord George Murray besieged his brother, the Hanoverian second duke, in Blair Castle — a family feud ended by the marriage of the respective son and daughter.

The 11th duke will inherit several thousand acres his predecessor had kept for his own use, as well as the family crest which features a savage in chains and the tongue-twisting motto "Furth Fortune and Fill the Fetters". If he wants, he can assume the colonelship of the Atholl Highlanders, the 110-strong domestic militia which parades irregularly for delighted tourists in Blair Atholl and Edinburgh.

The "soldiers" who have artillery and pipe band detachments, were given semi-official status by Queen Victoria during a Royal expedition to the area in 1845. Although they have never fired a shot in anger, they have an illustrious pedigree as descendants of the 77th Atholl Highlanders raised to fight in the American war of independence.

Recruiting is by the colonel's high-prized invitation, with membership usually

confined to people who work and live in the vicinity of Blair castle. There is no pay, but the blue tunics, kilts and equipment are provided free.

Mr Murray is expected to spend at least part of every year in the ducal quarters of a building which is a familiar whitewashed landmark to travellers on the A9 linking Perth and Inverness. Previous tenants include Mary Queen of Scots and Prince Charles Edward Stuart, aka Bonnie Prince Charlie.

The old duke, a former president of the Scottish Landowners Federation, had a mixed reputation among environmentalists. His encouragement of native woodland was admired, but he was felt to have the wrong attitude to predator control and deer numbers. There were also occasional run-ins with hill-walkers, such as when he wanted to transfer a right of way from a mountain pass to a path beside the A9.

"He wasn't that bad an egg, just part of an old-fashioned tradition of running estates," said Dave Morris, Scottish officer of the Ramblers. "We look to the new duke to adopt policies which are less biased towards sporting objectives and more towards conservation claims and public access."

Obituary, page 10

15 charged with watching cockfight face fines and jail

FORTY police and RSPCA officers who raided a shed at a caravan site to stop a cockfight found four dead birds in bags. Thames magistrates were told yesterday.

The spectators fled, but police, backed up by a helicopter, arrested 15 of them. As well as the four dead birds, two badly injured cocks were found at the site in Belvedere, south-east London, on April 9 last year.

Officers in Operation Foghorn found a board stating the rules of the pit. It read: "As soon as birds are in the pit, the fight is on... the bird that goes down two minutes three times is deemed to be loser. Once the birds are down in the pit, they must not be touched unless agreed by large parties. Any person who doesn't abide by these rules must state before pitting his bird. Belvedere Rules Apply."

that John Lee, aged 48, organised the cockfight, outlawed 150 years ago, and that police found bundles of cash and notebooks on Malcolm Cooper, 51, who told them he believed the event was just an auction of game birds.

Police also found cockfighting equipment, including a set of scales and waxed twine for tying spurs on to the birds' heels.

Fifteen people are accused under the Protection of Animals Act 1911 of being present when animals were placed together for the purpose of fighting. Six face further charges, including involvement in organising cockfighting and causing unnecessary suffering. Fourteen deny all the charges, the 15th failed to appear in court. They face fines of up to £3,000 for attending a cockfight and £5,000 or six months' jail for cruelty. The hearing continues today.

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YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

Beer today and gone tomorrow may be epitaph for the widget

Christopher Elliott

THE widget, immortalised by comedian Jack Dee in television commercials, is being canned by Britain's largest independent brewer.

Charles Wells, which brews Bombardier, Eagle and Fargo ales, is dropping the plastic device that releases gas when a can is opened to give beer a "draught beer taste", following customers' complaints that it masks the taste of stronger ales.

The brewery plans to introduce a new "nitrogen flush" system.

But a spokesman for Guinness, which in 1989 was the first brewer to introduce the widget, following a £5 million research programme, said the company stood by its "widget", insisting there had been no complaints.

Scottish Courage, which brews Britain's biggest selling widget beer in John Smiths, selling 25 million cans a year, also denies receiving any complaints from customers.

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

Health chiefs told to reverse cuts in care

MINISTERS yesterday ordered a "significant" number of health authorities to reinstate services — earlier cut — for the elderly and long-term sick.

The move represents a tacit admission that the National Health Service has in parts of Britain lost sight of its commitment to offer care from the cradle to the grave.

At the same time, ministers are acknowledging that "some" health authorities have been trying to introduce formal policies which would deny care to patients properly entitled to it. In particular, authorities have been told they cannot impose unreasonable limits on care for the terminally ill.

"Very short time limits (for instance of the order of a couple of weeks) are not appropriate and any time limits should be applied flexibly in the light of individual circumstances," authorities have been told.

Local policies on eligibility for long-term care are due to

take effect on April 1, after controversy over a number of cases including that of a Leeds man denied further NHS care after suffering a stroke which left him unable to move, eat or talk.

The Department of Health has reviewed each authority's draft eligibility criteria and present provision for long-term care. The department's overall findings were set out yesterday in a circular to authorities. NHS trusts and social services directors.

According to the circular, "a significant number of health authorities are likely to need to make changes to the levels and/or balance of their spending on continuing health care to address on-going gaps in services or to achieve a more appropriate balance of services".

The main areas identified are community health services and specialist support and rehabilitation. This implies that authorities will be told mainly not to re-open traditional geriatric care hospital beds, but to re-invest in other forms of care.

A Health Department spokesman confirmed there would be no extra funding for

the authorities concerned.

The department issued guidance on eligibility criteria last August. According to the circular, checks on local drafts have revealed "a number of points where eligibility criteria could be applied in a way which was not in line with the intention of the national guidance".

Criteria have to be sensitive to the complexity, or intensity, or unpredictability of a person's needs — and need not hinge on continuing medical care, as opposed to nursing.

The department's comments lend official endorsement to criticisms of many of the draft criteria. A survey last week by the Alzheimer's Disease Society found that limits of as little as three weeks' care for the terminally ill were common.

John Bowls, junior health minister responsible for long-term care policy, said: "Health authorities should be able to implement the basic parts of their guidance by April. More remains to be done."

Labour said the circular showed the Government's folly in refusing to set national criteria for care.

Juan Pablo Roque had flown into Havana first class — long before the incident that put US-Cuba relations back in the deep freeze of the Cold War. He had succeeded in duping one of America's most suspicious movements, burrowing his way into the heart of the other Cuba — the nation that lives in permanent exile

G2 cover story

سكان الجزائر

Meeting between old enemies raised alarm before Commons debate, and controversy over voting procedures

Murky trail from Ulster led PM to fall out with Trimble over crucial vote



David Trimble on Monday night after his party had voted against the Government



SDLP leader John Hume yesterday ... his meeting last Friday with Ian Paisley had alarmed the Official Unionists

Patrick Wintour reports on how the UUP ended up voting against the Government

THE trail that led John Major to fall out with his Ulster Unionist allies and yet win Monday night's vote on the Scott report is murky, byzantine and dripping with intrigue. The Ulster Unionists, the largest unionist party and Mr Major's oldest ally, first smelt a rat on Friday, when a rare meeting took place between two old enemies — John Hume, leader of the nationalist SDLP, and the Rev Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

Mr Trimble despatched his deputy, John Taylor, to make further enquiries on Saturday as to whether the DUP and SDLP had cut a deal with the Northern Ireland Office over the voting system. By Sunday, the Ulster Unionists were openly suggesting for the first time that they might vote against the Government. Until then, it had been assumed they might abstain. The previous week Mr Trimble, a former law lecturer, had been suggesting that William Waldegrave probably designed the "get off" but he felt the Attorney General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, was clearly culpable.

ent could have been unaware of the context in which their discussions were taking place. Mr Trimble met Mr Major about half an hour later in the Prime Minister's room in Westminster. By then, Mr Trimble was furious that officials were once again meeting Sinn Fein, so soon after the Docklands and Aldwych blasts. That anger was shared by the Conservative Party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, an Irishman with strong connections with the Unionists. He felt Northern Ireland ministers would have been politically astute not to have held this meeting until Tuesday, after the convention, the need for the intensive proximity talks including Sinn Fein to be held after, rather than before, the elections, and the terms of any referendum north and south of the border.

Unlikely alliance seeks voting benefit ELECTIONS may be regarded by many as the purest expression of democracy, but in Northern Ireland they have often proved to be a source of more division. The latest wrangling proves the point, with each party adopting positions which they trust will leave them "on top" after an election. This is particularly true of the two Unionist parties, which have for years contested the right to speak on behalf of the majority Protestant community. Last Friday saw the highly unusual creation of an alliance between the nationalist John Hume's SDLP and the hardline unionist Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists, against David Trimble's Ulster Unionist Party, Northern Ireland's largest party.

Most Catholics in north reject united Ireland

Martin Linton

ONLY a minority of Northern Ireland Catholics support the goal of a united Ireland and most back some kind of continuing link with Britain, according to a joint Guardian-Irish Times poll. Given four possible futures for Northern Ireland — part of the UK, a united Ireland, linked to both, or an independent country — only 27 per cent chose a united Ireland. As many as 42 per cent wanted Northern Ireland to have a constitutional link with both Britain and Ireland and another 18 per cent wanted to remain part of the UK.

Kingdom. But perhaps the most astonishing response in the poll — conducted simultaneously in Britain, Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic — came when people were asked how much the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic mattered to them. The British tended to think that the border did not matter. The Northern Ireland Protestants felt very strongly that it did, though only a quarter thought it was worth fighting for. The Catholic community in Northern Ireland, however, in whose name the IRA waged war on Britain for 26 years, are mainly of the opinion that the border does not matter and is not worth arguing about.

today. It shows that the public is much less despondent about the future of the peace process than the politicians. Unlike the many politicians who declared the peace process dead after the IRA's London bomb, most people in Ireland think it is "stalled at present" and most Britons think it is "still continuing". If the process has broken down, respondents were asked how they would apportion blame between the IRA, the British and Irish governments, the Ulster Unionists and anyone else.

Who's for peace? The view from Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic

Table with multiple columns and rows showing survey results on IRA bombing, border issues, and political opinions across GB, NI, Pro, and Cat IR.

Freeman's remarks on floor of House on gagging orders which made Tory critic change mind 'only reflects existing state of law' • Information campaigners back MP's bill

Ministers deny concession to 'rebel'

Richard Norton-Taylor THE Government yesterday denied it had made concessions to Rupert Allason, the Tory MP for Torbay, and spy writer whose last-minute change of mind during Monday night's debate on the Scott report gave it a dramatic single-vote victory. Mr Allason said he was persuaded to vote for the Government after concessions by Roger Freeman, the Civil Service minister, on the law covering public interest immunity — so-called gagging orders.

Mr Freeman defended the use of PII certificates in the Matrix Churchill arms-to-Iraq case but said that in future "the presumption should be disclosure", rather than suppression of documents. Mr Allason seized on this at the end of Monday night's vote. But the Government insisted yesterday that Mr Freeman had done no more than reflect the existing state of judge-made law following a



Roger Freeman ... would look again at PII law



Rupert Allason ... switched vote after minister's words

cept Sir Richard Scott's recommendation that PII claims should never again be used in a criminal trial in the blanket way they were in the Matrix Churchill case. Opposition MPs, meanwhile, seized on a passage in Mr Freeman's speech in the Commons on Monday night

which they said did not correspond with the findings of the Scott inquiry. He told MPs: "Non-lethal equipment did not include dual-use equipment if intelligence was available that there would be military end-use". The Scott report shows that ministers knew from intelli-

gence reports that Matrix Churchill machine tools were being used by Iraq to make arms, but agreed to let them go, partly to maintain the flow of information to MI6 from Paul Henderson, the company's former managing director and chief defendant at the trial. The report says that William Waldegrave, then a Foreign Office minister, was warned in 1988 that Iraq intended to use Matrix Churchill machine tools for "armaments and munitions factories". Mr Waldegrave responded: "Screwdrivers are also required to make H bombs".

Iraq machine tools warning in Matrix Churchill letter 'shows need to protect whistleblowers'

Richard Norton-Taylor A CRUCIAL warning by a Matrix Churchill employee was using machine tools to make weapons was ignored for more than three years, highlighting the urgent need for a law to protect whistleblowers, supporters of the measure say today. The letter, from an unidentified employee at the Coventry-based firm, was sent to Lord Howe, the then foreign secretary, in January 1988. It said that the company was "working on a £20 million order for ... lathes to be used for munitions production in Iraq" and that "these machines are going to be used in machine shell cases".

highly significant". It was sent by Lord Howe's advisers to the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Trade and Industry, and MI6, but was never shown to ministers. Officials wrongly assumed that the whistleblower had asked for the information to be kept confidential. If it had been heeded, "subsequent events would have taken a markedly different turn", says Public Concern at Work, a charity sponsoring the Public Interest Disclosure Bill to be debated in the Commons on Friday. Guy Dehn, the charity's director, said yesterday that civil servants would have acted on the warning if the whistleblower had been protected from reprisals by management. Under the bill, whistleblowers would also be protected if they publicised their concerns when employers ignored them. The letter, which finally emerged be-

fore the Matrix Churchill trial in 1992, was one of the key factors behind Michael Heseltine's reluctance to sign a Public Interest Immunity certificate, a so-called gagging order. Told about the letter by his officials, he noted that "it told me that everybody knew" the company's machine tools were being used by Iraq to make arms. The letter was one of many documents covered by ministers' PII certificates, he then traded secretary, noted that "in the Matrix Churchill case, no rational person who had looked at the files, could have said that the documents should not have been disclosed". The Public Interest Immunity Bill, which is also backed by the Freedom of Information Campaign and has cross-party support, has been tabled by the Labour MP for Islington, Don Touhig.

Rogue MP trumpets cause across outback

Graeme Campbell covers a vast area to woo voters and annoy the Labour Party, reports Christopher Zinn



Crossroads... Maverick MP Graeme Campbell finds a local resident with whom to discuss his options. All the places signposted are in his gigantic constituency

THE dusty outback seat of Kalgoorlie is said to be the biggest constituency in the world. Ten times the size of Britain, it is a suitably epic arena for Australia's most outspoken politician and bane of the Labour Party.

South. It is arid, sheep-farming land, but rich in gold and other minerals. To represent it in far-off Canberra requires stamina and sacrifice. Mr Campbell's wife Michelle said that in one 283-day period last year he was at home for just 31 nights.

Saturday's federal election. The maverick MP who turned Kalgoorlie from a safe Liberal to a safe Labour seat is fighting this time as an independent. In November he was finally expelled from the Labour Party after years of scathing outbursts.

But when the MP who arrived in Australia at the age of 11 as a £10 migrant helped launch a new party called Australians Against Further Immigration, he finally lost Labour's endorsement.

The gold-mining town, noted for having a street full of brothels, has certainly taken Mr Campbell to its heart. Stella Strong, who runs the Red House bordello, wrote to the Kalgoorlie Miner newspaper: "He has always treated my staff and me as equals."

MP, such support might not be enough. "It's very, very hard to think I can hold it. I wouldn't put it any higher than that," Mr Campbell said last night.

Howard [the opposition leader] with any enthusiasm. They are voting against Keating. Mr Campbell is an out-and-out populist. He boasts that he is Anglo-Celtic and proud of it. He claims to have the support of many immigrants who, he believes, want to be part of a robustly Australian and not a "politically correct" culture.

He also claims to have the support of many of the Aborigines who live in remote communities in his constituency. He has great respect for his electorate. They "have a sense of independence, honesty and commonsense you don't find elsewhere in Australia," he says.

Vietnam's wildlife losing the peace

Rampant poaching and large-scale destruction of the rainforest to fuel the struggling economy is posing more of a threat to imperilled animals such as the langur monkey, right, than 50 years of warfare, writes Tony Perry



"You end up with a series of steep hillsides that are available for wildlife. They're like scattered islands, and that's not a good way to manage habitat." William Langbauer, director of research at the Pittsburgh Zoo, said: "If we don't do something quick a lot of indigenous species will go extinct. Vietnam is ripe for enlightened conservation."

Despite China's request for a delay to give Cuba's foreign minister, Roberto Robaina Gonzalez, a chance to address the council, the US insisted on immediate action. The council also asked the International Civil Aviation Organisation, a UN agency, to investigate the incident.

Cuba, but shrank from a weightier formal resolution. Although the US secured prompt action, the final statement was toned down substantially. Instead of condemning Cuba, the council said it strongly deplored Cuba's action. A reference to Cuba as a threat to world order was deleted.

Cuba, which says it shot down the two US civilian planes in defence of its airspace after issuing warnings, reacted with defiance. "Cuba neither fears nor accepts threats," the foreign ministry said in a statement published on the front page of the Communist Party daily Granma.

also cover the provocation of earlier flights by Brothers to the Rescue into Cuba. The US administration has been criticised by some analysts for not acting to prevent Brothers to the Rescue from violating Cuban sovereignty. Diplomats attributed American haste at the UN to the intense domestic pressure on President Clinton to adopt a firm position. With the Florida primary two weeks away, Mr Clinton's Republican rivals in the presidential campaign are jockeying for political advantage.

IF HALF a century of war was bad for the wild animals of Vietnam, 20 years of peace are proving even worse. The Indochina tiger which once roamed the countryside is rarely seen. Elephants, bears, peacocks, the clouded leopard, deer, monkeys and other wildlife are disappearing because of rampant poaching and large-scale destruction of the forest. Even the deadly cobra is in full retreat.

German zoos and the American branch of the World Wide Fund for Nature are working with the Vietnamese to save threatened species. "You have wildlife that somehow managed to survive 50 years of warfare but may not survive the next 15 to 20 years of economic growth," said Karen Killmar, associate curator of mammals at the San Diego Zoo.

Up to half the forests were damaged or destroyed by the war. The Vietnam News Agency estimates that with several hundred thousand acres being cleared annually they will disappear completely within decades. "It's as if everything that is flat is being cultivated," said Dennis Pate, curator of the Metro Washington Park Zoo in Portland, Oregon.

WWF is also training national park guards to counter poachers and is urging the Vietnamese to expand sanctuary areas. In April the wildlife group is co-sponsoring with a Vietnamese business organisation and the American Chamber of Commerce a conference in Ho Chi Minh City to discuss ways in which economic development and animal survival can co-exist. — Los Angeles Times.

step aside for the good of the country. "Continuously, the president's fate is in the hands of the legislature, whose members are held in low esteem by an apathetic and cynical public. The case seems likely to drag on for months and end in a second exonerations — unless, that is, moves afoot to change the rules of the game succeed.

change the rules of the game succeed. "If the impeachment proceedings take another six months, this country is finished," said the Liberal senator Luis Guillermo Giraldo, one of the members of the president's own party calling for his resignation.

Gen Matalana openly favours a "technical coup" to put a military-civilian junta in power while fresh elections are prepared. "The moment will come," he says, "when the solution will have to be outside the constitution."

Others favour a full amnesty in return for permanent withdrawal from public life. A solution some feel would allow Mr Samper a dignified way out of the crisis. It would be, in the words of one senator, "a Nixon solution à la Colombiana".

China pours scorn on the 'failure' John Major

JOHN MAJOR'S travails appear to have finally led the Chinese Communist Party to ditch its predilection for watching Western politicians. Mr Major, who is expected to meet the Chinese prime minister Li Peng in Bangkok tomorrow, has been described by Beijing's mouthpiece in Hong Kong as the failed leader of a failed party. "Major has... revealed himself lacking in the vision, experience and knowledge of a leader," an editorial in the newspaper Wen Wei Po says. "Only a Labour Party government can save Britain".

Tibetans die in desert of snow

THE worst snow storms for a century are endangering the lives of tens of thousands of Tibetan nomads by devastating the herds of yak and sheep they depend upon for food, clothing and fuel. The Yushu Autonomous Prefecture in the Chinese province of Qinghai is at the centre of what aid workers warn could be a humanitarian catastrophe. The district is the site of the secret laboratory that built China's first nuclear bomb and a labour camp archipelago. "Medicines says Frontières reports that temperatures in the area, high on the Tibetan plateau, have dropped as low as -47C, killing more than three-quarters of livestock. Aid workers who have visited Yushu, an area of 104,000 square miles inhabited by 200,000 people, say villages are littered with frozen carcasses. "If the yaks die, the people die too," said Serge Depotter, an MSP field worker, speaking by telephone from the Qinghai capital Xining, a 20-hour journey by jeep from the more accessible parts of the district. The area is too high for crops or trees so nomads trade cattle for the firewood they need to survive. "They are getting very close to the end of their food supplies," said Mr Depotter, who visited the area last week.

News in brief Hutus kill 46 refugees

Hutu rebels killed 46 people in refugee camps in two attacks in north-western Burundi, an army regional commander said yesterday. Colonel Lucien Ruyirya said 30 people were killed and two soldiers wounded in attacks on Monday in Cibitoke province. Rebels killed 16 people in another raid in the province on Friday. — Reuters. Dhaka crackdown Bangladesh police arrested another two key opposition figures yesterday in what appears to be a continuing crackdown on government opponents. They were Tofayel Ahmed of the Awami League and Abdul Kader Mollah of the Jamaat-e-Islami. — AP. PLO minister ill Farouk Kaddoumi, who serves as the PLO's foreign minister, has been taken to hospital in Tunis with heart problems. — AP. 10 die in pile-up At least 10 people died yesterday when more than 120 lorries and cars crashed and burst into flames in thick fog on a motorway near the northern Belgian city of Ghent. — AP. Temporary support Managers of a struggling factory in the southern Russian city of Voronezh are unable to pay their workers in roubles so have started paying them in bras instead. The machine-building plant apparently traded some of its products for a shipment of Chinese-made bras. — AP.

Colombia considers Nixon-style solution to Samper's Watergate

Pressure is growing for the president to go before the case against him is resolved, writes Phil Gunson in Bogotá. WHAT did President Ernesto Samper of Colombia have about the drugs money that allegedly financed his 1994 campaign? When did he know it, and did he, as his former defence minister and campaign manager, mount a "signature cover-up" when word began to leak out? These are some of the questions to be resolved by a parliamentary commission which reopened its hearings today into a case reminiscent of the Watergate scandal which cost Richard Nixon the US presidency 20 years ago. Having declared in December that there was no case to answer, the commission was obliged to reconvene when Fernando Botero, the former defence minister who is himself awaiting trial in connection with the scandal, changed his testimony and directly implicated the president. A fortnight ago the government's independent prosecutor, Alfonso Valderrama, presented the commission with allegations against Mr Samper based largely on Mr Botero's statements, including electoral fraud, misuse of government funds and "manoeuvres aimed at covering up the facts". Those due to be questioned include not only the president, but his foreign, interior and communications ministers. All can theoretically be sent to jail. The president continues to proclaim his innocence and has rejected repeated calls from the church and business community, among others, to

Cuba defiant in face of US strong-arm tactics

have infiltrated the group on behalf of the Cuban government, said that Brothers to the Rescue had planned attacks in Cuba and hoped to assassinate President Fidel Castro. Mr Robaina was expected to provide evidence to the council last night that the two planes were intercepted inside Cuban airspace. Ms Albright was expected to bring charts and maps to argue that the planes were in international airspace. When the statement was adopted, Ms Albright said: "The Cuban crime has been really shown in the council, where we have deeply deplored the acts of the Cuban air force for having shot down two unarmed civilian aircraft." Russia's ambassador, Sergei Lavrov, expressed sympathy for Cuba's position, saying that an investigation should

Colombia considers Nixon-style solution to Samper's Watergate

whether he knew [about the drug cartel contributions] or not, he's in the same boat". Another solution which appears to be gathering support is a punto final (full stop) law, vaguely modelled on the Argentine law of the same name that granted amnesty to military officers accused of human rights abuses under the dictatorship. Senator Jaime Dussán, a Samper supporter who plans to present a full stop bill this week for public debate, says it would cover all those accused of crimes against the state, including drug traffickers, guerrillas and corrupt politicians. Trials would continue but sentences would be negotiated, and the politicians agreed to be covered by the law would be banned from holding public office. Others favour a full amnesty in return for permanent withdrawal from public life. A solution some feel would allow Mr Samper a dignified way out of the crisis. It would be, in the words of one senator, "a Nixon solution à la Colombiana".

Colombia considers Nixon-style solution to Samper's Watergate

change the rules of the game succeed. "If the impeachment proceedings take another six months, this country is finished," said the Liberal senator Luis Guillermo Giraldo, one of the members of the president's own party calling for his resignation. Retired General José Joaquín Matalana, a former chief of the joint staff, says: "While Samper is president the country will remain ungovernable." Gen Matalana openly favours a "technical coup" to put a military-civilian junta in power while fresh elections are prepared. "The moment will come," he says, "when the solution will have to be outside the constitution."

Colombia considers Nixon-style solution to Samper's Watergate

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مكتبة الصالح

Both sides in Chechnya are replenishing 'stocks' for swaps, writes Andrew Harding in Grozny

Prisoners of war for sale

AGRUESOME trade in human lives is flourishing in Russia's breakaway republic of Chechnya. Chechen families are being asked to pay thousands of pounds in bribes to free relatives from a notorious archipelago of Russian "filtration" camps.

On the other side, dozens of Russian mothers are venturing into the mountains hoping to strike deals with Chechen fighters holding their sons as POWs after 14 months of fighting.

"It's like the Middle Ages here - things have got worse and worse," said Hussein Khammidov, head of a voluntary service which helps Chechens in their search for relatives.

Mr Khammidov, who set up his missing persons centre after his two sons were killed

in the war, said the exchange "business" was booming following the breakdown of peace talks last autumn and the suspension of official prisoner swaps.

There is now strong evidence that both sides are trying to replenish their "stocks", the one taking more Russian soldiers hostage, the other detaining young Chechen men who dare to run the gauntlet of Russian checkpoints outside Grozny.

The disappearance of an estimated 2,000 Chechen civilians has been condemned by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe's mission in Chechnya. Parallels have been drawn with the situation in Argentina in the 1970s.

"There are dozens of fresh cases every month of young Chechen men who are arrested, often on arbitrary

'They are beaten, deprived of food and tortured, including mock executions'

grounds, and then disappear into the Russian camps," said an OSCE representative, Roman Wasilievski. "Some buy their way out, but by all anecdotal evidence - and some cases directly known to us - they are beaten systematically, deprived of food and tortured, including mock executions."

Ramzan Musaliev, a French journalist who witnessed last week's brutal Russian assault on the town of Murogzhenaki, said he saw three Chechens being viciously beaten by troops. Another prisoner was kept overnight almost naked in a small pit

in a muddy field.

The journalist was lucky to survive his time in a Russian camp. On the way there, six men were shot and another two suffocated. "When we got there, they beat me unconscious - three times in all."

Families hoping to buy freedom for their Chechen relatives have to pay about 5 million roubles (£1,000). But those who have the money often encounter new problems.

"The Russians told me they have my brother," said a Chechen woman, Madina Mogomadova. "First they wanted money,

but then they told me to find a Russian prisoner of war to swap for him. I found one, called Sergei Limonov, in the mountains. But then they told me that Limonov is a deserter, and that I must find a Russian officer instead. Now they tell me they no longer have my brother - that he has been sentenced to 15 years in prison."

Russian parents looking for their soldier sons often receive little better treatment from their own government. "They tricked us into the scam," said Tamara Todesechuk, who travelled thousands of miles from the Pacific coast to search for her son Sergei, who was captured two months ago by Chechen fighters.

She found him "fat and healthy," living in a mountain village with his Chechen captors. "I held his hand ...

the Russians agreed to a swap - they said they would bring 26 Chechens to exchange but they never turned up - for 'technical reasons', they said."

Finally, one Chechen prisoner was exchanged for four Russians, but "the Chechen was in such a terrible state he died within a week."

Chechen fighters have generally won praise from Russian parents for the way they look after their prisoners. But hospitality sometimes comes at a high price.

"They want \$40,000 from me," said one elderly Russian man. He said people in his home town were helping him to raise the money to buy back his officer son, but he was worried about heading into the mountains with so much cash, after hearing stories of similar journeys ending in tragedy.

14 die in pile-up on Belgian motorway



AT LEAST 14 people were killed and dozens injured after 120 vehicles ploughed into each other in thick fog on a Belgian motorway yesterday. Police said at least one French and one Dutch national died in the pile-up on the E17 motorway, which links Antwerp in the north to the French city of Lille in the south. They believed all survivors had been freed from their vehicles, but said the death toll could rise if more bodies are found in the burnt-out wreckage. The accident happened yesterday morning close to the northwestern town of Deinze. The police said motorists had been surprised by a sudden thick fog. "We drove into a wall of fog," said an Englishman living in Belgium, Marc Schoonackers, police commander of the nearby town of Antwerp, who saw the start of the accident, said there was a series of small explosions and then fire spread quickly through the cars. A petrol tanker loaded with 5,000 gallons of petrol was involved but did not catch fire. - Reuter, Deinze

Underdog bares teeth to halt Bosnia's 'carve-up'

Julian Borger in Sarajevo

THE former Bosnian prime minister Haris Silajdzic accused Serb, Croat and Muslim nationalist parties yesterday of splitting the country three ways, in defiance of the Dayton peace accord, and laid out his plans for a new multi-ethnic political movement to fight for a unitary state in this year's elections.

Mr Silajdzic, who resigned as head of the government last month, said the new party, as yet unnamed, would be launched within the next fortnight.

But in an interview yesterday at his modest new office in a central Sarajevo tower block, he said he did not expect the elections, scheduled for September at the latest, to be free and fair.

He accused the governing Party of Democratic Action (SDA), the Muslim movement which expelled him earlier this month, of using communist-style tactics to limit access to the media, and of co-opting generals and religious leaders into its executive.

"It increasingly looks like a bad copy of the old communist system," he said in his most outspoken attack to date on his former party.

The Dayton accord, signed in December, envisages a unitary Bosnia consisting of a Muslim-Croat federation, and a Serb republic (Republika Srpska). But Mr Silajdzic argued that all three leading nationalist parties - the SDA, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), and the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) - were working towards a three-way partition of the country.

He made his remarks against the backdrop of a continuing exodus of Serbs from the five Sarajevo suburbs due to be transferred to federation control, edged on by SDS leadership under Radovan Karadzic.

That exodus has been given impetus this week by a Nato offer to provide security for Bosnian Serb military trucks helping to remove Serb residents.

"The whole aim of Karadzic is to partition Bosnia and, if they extract the Serbs from Sarajevo, he knows the Croats and the Bosnian Muslims will not be able to go back to the Republika Srpska

and this is the goal that the international community participates in because it is convenient."

He added that, while he was prime minister, some former SDA colleagues had shown "a lack of enthusiasm" for encouraging Serbs to stay on.

"The Serb exodus spells the end of a moderate, multi-ethnic core around Sarajevo," said one diplomat. "Those are all potential Silajdzic voters you see leaving."

The 50-year-old former history professor was pessimistic about the future of the Muslim-Croat federation, which he said had become little more than a front for the creation of two separate ethnic states.

Nearly two years after the Dayton peace plan. If it falls apart, there will be scant chance of the federation and the Republika Srpska knitting together.

The consequence of failure, Mr Silajdzic said, would be a rump Islamic state sandwiched between a greater Serbia and a greater Croatia. The Bosnian army fought for 14 months to prevent such a partition, but now, Mr Silajdzic says, the SDA leadership is willing to acquiesce.

"I think it's a power problem," he said. "The SDA thinks it's better to have more power in a smaller space than less power on a wider space."

The next steps, Mr Silajdzic

predicted, would be the radicalisation of the Muslim minority, and a new war within five years, in which the Croats and the Serbs would seek to partition the Muslim rump.

Political observers here find it impossible to predict Mr Silajdzic's electoral chances, but he will enter the race as the underdog.

The nationwide television networks are controlled by the nationalist parties, and even in federation territory the government is blocking the creation of an independent national channel.

Mr Silajdzic's party organisation stretches to three campaign workers in a pair of rooms financed, he insists, out of his own pocket. He admits he has so far not raised any campaign funds, and is hoping for donations from businessmen among the Bosnian diaspora in Scandinavia and Germany.

Against these daunting odds, Mr Silajdzic is gambling on what he terms the "democratic dissident" strand in Bosnian history. Asked to provide evidence that the spirit of tolerance has survived 43 months of war, he gestured at his spartan office and laughed.

"You're looking at it," he said.



Moving day... A young boy waits outside his home in Ilijas, a suburb of Sarajevo, as his parents prepare to join the Serb exodus

Krajina Serb charged with attack on Zagreb

Reuters in The Hague

THE Krajina Serb leader in a military court charged with ordering a cluster bomb attack on the Croatian capital Zagreb last year in which at least seven civilians died, was accused yesterday of using terror tactics.

A Swedish prosecution lawyer, Eric Ostberg, told the war crimes tribunal: "The shelling of Zagreb was not a reprisal. It was a terror retaliation and it was unlawful."

Survivors are expected to testify against Mr Martić, who is charged with ordering the Zagreb attacks of May 1995 after a Croatian offensive against the breakaway Krajina Serbs.

The United Nations tribunal said in its indictment last July that Mr Martić had given orders to fit rockets with cluster bomb warheads, designed to break up into a number of explosive parts which scatter over a large area.

Mr Ostberg, addressing the

tribunal at the start of three days of hearings, said: "Zagreb was lucky. I am surprised that many, many more people didn't die. They [the rockets] were sent targeting the centre of the city and they hit the centre of the city."

The damage was less than anyone could imagine."

Although Mr Martić is still at large the chief prosecutor, Richard Goldstone, has requested hearings at which evidence can be presented and witnesses and victims asked to testify against him.

Belgrade lifts sanctions against separatist rebels

Reuters in Belgrade

THE Yugoslav government lifted sanctions against Bosnia's separatist Serbs yesterday, the official news agency Tanjug reported.

The suspension is expected to have little immediate impact but will clearly boost morale among the moderate Bosnian Serb leaders who are now at odds with hardliners loyal to the increasingly isolated

"president", Radovan Karadzic, and his parliamentarian "Speaker", Momcilo Krajisnik.

The Nato secretary-general, Javier Solana, certified on Monday that the Bosnian Serbs had withdrawn from zones of separation along a new inter-ethnic boundary, thereby fulfilling a requirement for suspending UN sanctions.

The zones were set out in last November's peace accords drafted in Dayton, Ohio.

UN sanctions against the two republics which make up Yugoslavia's Serbia and Montenegro, have already been suspended.

Belgrade imposed military, economic and political sanctions against the Bosnian Serb leadership on August 4 1994.

The action was taken after the separatist leaders repeatedly rejected peace plans and snubbed their former champions, the Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic.

Return to Madrid's supremacy haunts Catalans

A conservative electoral victory will end the president's reign as national kingmaker, writes Adela Gooch in Barcelona

FOR the past three years Catalonia's president, Jordi Pujol, has revelled in the role of political kingmaker in Spain, propping up Felipe Gonzalez's ailing Socialist government while extracting concessions for his independent-minded region.

The increasing likelihood of the conservative opposition of the Popular Party, winning Sunday's general election is making him anxious, and desperate as he is to avoid any weakening of Barcelona's influence in Madrid.

If the polls are right, the PP will win enough votes to govern without Mr Pujol's co-operation, again raising the spectre of Castilian supremacy which has always haunted the Catalans.

The PP leader, José María Aznar, would be less tolerant of nationalist demands than Mr Gonzalez, despite his acceptance of the principle of devolution.

Some Catalans feel that devolution has already gone far enough in their region and Mr Pujol has started to lose votes to the PP. There are predictions that it could increase

its support in the region by up to a third, returning as many as 12 MPs to Madrid.

"When the right is strong in Spain, the rich Catalan bourgeoisie supports it. When it is weak, they lend their votes to the nationalists," Luis Foix, deputy editor of the Catalan daily La Vanguardia, explained.

"They backed Pujol when he was anti-Socialist and have now turned against him for supporting Gonzalez."

"What have the Socialists done?" asked one from the Mancha area of central Spain. "I'm tired of paying taxes which go to line Socialist honchos' pockets, I'm sick of our companies being sold off to foreigners, and I'm sick of Europe and the agricultural policy which has meant we had to uproot our vines, stop fishing and allow Moroccan produce into our markets."

"Elsewhere the young and enterprising are leaving the Socialists," said a Barcelona lawyer and former independent member of Mr Pujol's regional government. "In Catalonia that is happening to Pujol."

The Catalan president suffers from many of the same

problems as Mr Gonzalez. He too has become an establishment figure with few new ideas and several corruption scandals under his belt. His Convergencia i Unió coalition could be one of the main casualties of the election, dropping from 17 seats in the Madrid parliament to 13 or 14.

After 15 years in power, however, Mr Pujol has succeeded in giving Catalans a deep sense of nationhood. They expect special treatment from Madrid and could cause trouble if they do not get it.

"History shows you can govern Spain with Catalonia or against it but you cannot ignore it," one Catalan warned.

Spain was divided into 17 autonomous areas as part of the transition to democracy after Franco's death, Catalonia and the Basque country receiving privileged status.

Mr Aznar is determined to bring the devolution process to a close, and in particular, as part of his deficit-cutting plans, to make the regions more responsible for their own spending.

Catalans consider their region the economic engine which pulls the rest of Spain, and feel they do not get a fair reward for their hard work. They want to raise and spend more of their own taxes.

Libya 'building gas factory'

Reuters in Tripoli

LIBYA is building an enormous underground poison gas factory, German newspaper said yesterday. A German businessman who allegedly supplied equipment for the plant is under arrest, one paper said.

Die Welt said American and German intelligence services believed the plant at Tarhuna, 40 miles south-east of Tripoli, would be able to start producing chemical and biological weapons in two years at the earliest.

The CIA had expected production to start last spring, but Libya has had trouble obtaining from abroad the equipment needed to complete the factory, Die Welt said.

Western intelligence has known about the plant since 1992 and Germany's main spy agency has been able to obtain copies of the blueprints, Die Welt said. Its design is based on a factory built by Libya in Rabta with the help of German companies in the 1980s, Die Welt reported. Libya says the Rabta plant in 1990.

Western intelligence believes that tons of chemical weapons produced at Rabta are to be stored at the new site in Tarhuna, Die Welt reported.

Libya has also bought North Korean Scud rockets which could be used to deliver chemical weapons, the newspaper said.

According to Die Welt, no German companies are suspected of helping Libya build the new poison gas factory. But another newspaper, the Berliner Zeitung, said that a Stuttgart businessman had been arrested for allegedly delivering what the paper called "gas-cleaning" equipment for the Libyan plant. - AP, Bonn.

Hamburg tops wealth index

Reuters, Brussels

THE Hamburg, Brussels and Paris regions are the richest in the European Union, but on its southern border Portuguese, Spanish and Greek regions trail badly.

A report by the EU's statistics office Eurostat puts Hamburg at the top of the league for gross domestic product per person with an index of 100, almost twice the EU average (50).

Brussels is second with 182 and Paris-De France, which embraces the French capital and its vast suburbs, comes third on 166.

The table, which is based on 1993 figures, puts Portugal's Alentejo and the Azores way behind the rest, with an index of only 42.

No region in Greece, Portugal or Spain reached the EU average although Spain's Balearics and Madrid came close with 98 and 97. More surprisingly, with the exception of Stockholm, all regions in Sweden were below the EU average. - Reuter, Brussels.

Blair: tough on pollution

But will he be tough on the causes of pollution?

IF TONY BLAIR means what he says about the environment then his speech yesterday at the Royal Society will mark a watershed in Labour's approach to this vitally important subject which has often seemed of only peripheral interest. Cynics can easily say that Mr Blair's words sound fresh because this is the first time he has spoken at length on the subject, but that's not the point. The speech was clearly the result of a lot of consultation with specialists before being welded by the leader into a central part of the party's philosophy. It has suddenly become part of Labour's new driving force of mutual responsibility of stakeholding in which a political nirvana comes out of a balance between opposing interests, consumers as well as producers, and the environment as well as economic growth.

There is plenty in yesterday's speech to satisfy all but the most *avant-garde* of environmentalists. Apart from the headline-grabbing prediction of 50,000 new jobs arising from a nationwide programme of energy efficiency, there is a commitment to reduce CO emissions by an ambitious 20 per cent by 2010; reform of the CAP; a parliamentary environmental audit committee; publication of new green indicators to monitor the country's well-being; proposals to encourage industry to pitch for more of the \$250 billion-a-year environmental technology market — not to mention that political will-o-the-wisp, a "proper integrated transport system". And this is surely the first time a Labour leader has ever stowed concern for the plight of the lapwing in a major policy statement. Mr Blair is almost too clever by half in describing a continuity in Labour's concern for the environment from Keir Hardie's first manifesto (which included the reforestation of Lancashire as one of its ten proposals), through the pipe-smoking Clement Attlee's environmental concern for water

quality and access to the countryside, to his own restatement of Clause 4 which inserts concern for a healthy environment where nationalisation used to be.

These are, of course, mere words and some of them — like stakeholding — have only been in Labour's vocabulary a matter of weeks. Political parties are notorious for ditching uncomfortably ambitious manifestoes when they collide with the realities of office. It is easy for Mr Blair to quote the best practice of local authorities as an example of what could be achieved by others. Yes, to be sure, if every local authority did pioneering work like Cardiff's recycling schemes or Sheffield's generation of energy from the city's waste, Britain would be a much more environmentally friendly place to be. But the job of persuading all the other less enlightened councils to do something similar will be long and hard and will require sustained political energy.

What might give Blair's vision a longevity that some of his predecessors' efforts lacked (like Harold Wilson's opportunistic espousal of new technology) is that it is driven by a moral as well as an economic imperative. He sees the environment as a "fundamental building block" of a stable community which government has a moral duty to pursue. People's right to environmental improvement is part of the social justice which a stakeholding economy must pursue even if (as he admits) there is no chance of a government satisfying all the aspirations of the environmental lobby. No one knows if a newly elected Tony Blair would carry out such ambitious plans as passionately as he delivers his speeches. But he certainly gives the impression that he means business. The most useful thing to do would be to put his speech in a safe place for five years marked: "To be checked against delivery".

Time to stand up to Mr Howard

The Prisons Ombudsman must confront the Home Secretary

THE Prisons Ombudsman meets the Home Secretary today. They are in serious disagreement over their respective powers. There have even been reports of the Ombudsman, Vice Admiral Sir Peter Woodhead, threatening to resign — reports which he has denied. No one should need reminding in the wake of Scott of the crucial importance of establishing clear lines of accountability — between civil servants and ministers, ministers and Parliament and, in those services with ombudsmen, between the ombudsman, ministers and civil servants. Whitehall is up to its old tricks: doing everything in its powers to restrict the remit of independent monitors. The prison service speaks about the need to clarify Sir Peter's role. "There appears to have been some misinterpretation of the role of Sir Peter. The ombudsman's remit is to investigate complaints by prisoners about the prison service as an agency, not the decisions of individual ministers. There have been a few cases when this remit has not been adhered to." If Sir Peter is not threatening to resign after that statement, it is time he was.

There are two reasons why Sir Peter must insist on reviewing decisions by ministers as well as civil servants. First, because no minister in the history of the Home Office has done more to muddy the line between policy and operations than Michael Howard. When it has suited him — and according to the last Director General, Derek Lewis, this was on a daily basis — he has

intervened in the most minute details, demanding 1,000 documents from the Director in four months on different matters and yet visiting only six prisons over 13 months. Sir Peter's remit was quite specific, as the Home Office note on his appointment made clear: the right to look at the merits of individual decisions as well as the procedures with a guarantee there would be "unfettered access to prison service documents". But even if Howard had not interfered in operations, there would still be a need to look at ministerial decisions: taking up individual grievances can inevitably and up challenging policy decisions. Yesterday's new health guidelines on longstay care rose directly from the Health Ombudsman's angry reports about seriously disabled patients being wrongly turfed out of hospital beds. William Reid rightly refused to shrink from the implications of his reports on individual patients — Sir Peter must follow suit.

Sir Peter is on probation. He knows he was a poor second choice — the original shortlist of three distinguished penologists being rejected by the Home Secretary for being too liberal. Instead he chose Sir Peter, a man with no penal background. Created in 1994, the post was proposed by Woolf after the 1990 prison riots. Its remit was clear: preventing further riots by ensuring justice does not stop at the prison gate. Inevitably, it must mean confronting the Home Secretary — particularly one who pays justice such scant regard.

Colombia and the politics of evil

The blame for narcotic-related corruption must be shared

NARCO-POLITICS have been tolerated in Colombia for years, but a critical mass of public protest has led to a challenge which now threatens the President himself. It is no secret that drug traffickers have manipulated a whole series of presidential campaigns over many years. Candidates have accepted the loan of planes and outright gifts of cash with little attempt at concealment. Politicians brazenly claimed to be unaware of their benefactor's drug connection. When accusations first surfaced that Ernesto Samper's presidential campaign in 1994 had taken millions of dollars from the Cali cartel, there was a general shrugging of shoulders.

Today, as a parliamentary commission opens hearings into Colombia's "Sampergate", the atmosphere is very different. A determined prosecutor, Alfonso Valderrama, is backed by an increasingly angry public. The case has

opened a crack in the unity of Colombia's power-sharing elite under which a climate of political repression and institutionalised crime has flourished for nearly three decades. Human rights organisations have reported appalling levels of violence. Thousands have been killed by police and paramilitary forces, or by ranchers and drug dealers, including 1,500 members of the leftwing Patriotic Union opposition — often falsely accused of terrorism against the state. All this was done in the name of "stability" too often applauded from the north.

For years it has suited the purposes of US hemispheric policy to condone the savagery of successive regimes. And it does not take much effort to guess where the biggest market can be found for Colombian cocaine. It is easy to urge the Colombians now to "clean up their act" but the responsibility must be shared.



Letters to the Editor

Scott, not quite forgotten

GOVERNMENT ministers have sought to extricate themselves from Scott by claiming they are prepared to open up information (Tories hang on by one vote, February 27).

They and all MPs — Labour, Conservative (including that self-proclaimed defender of the public's right to know, Rupert Allason), Liberals and others — have a chance to put this into practice on Friday by supporting the private member's Public Interest Disclosure Bill which seeks its second reading. Few, if any, of the events leading to Scott would have taken place had this measure been law. It will be interesting to see if the Government supports the bill on Friday. If not, ministers who pledged more open government and greater information on Monday night will be exposed as hypocrites. Again, Denis MacShane MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

WILL Mr Major now amend questions of procedure to say that ministers may knowingly mislead Parliament, provided that they do so without duplicitous intent? He should remember that, whichever way he takes this decision, he may have to answer for it in opposition as well as in office.

Lord Russell, Liberal Democrat spokesman, House of Lords, London SW1A 0AA.

SIR THOMAS Bingham intervened at a politically sensitive moment leading up to a Common vote. It raises

the fear that his intervention is a continuation of the barrage of propaganda emanating from the Government over Scott. Can it mean that the situation is even worse than that uncovered so far and the Conservatives have managed to turn the judiciary into a political tool, as well as the Civil Service? This would leave only the armed forces beyond political control. I am sure that Sir Thomas appreciates what happens to the "letters" he has been to defend once that final hurdle is breached.

Jamie Stephenson, Ravenswood, Chambers Road, Southampton, Merseyside PR8 6JQ.

I WAS amazed to hear Ian Lang accuse the last Labour government of supplying arms to Argentina, and say that these arms were subsequently used against British troops. Before 1979, Argentina was a friendly country and there was no arms embargo against it. After the Tories came to power in 1979, they indicated clearly that they did not consider Argentina as a threat, even to the extent of withdrawing HMS Endurance from maintaining only a minimal presence on the Falkland Islands.

That the Argentines responded as they did to this open invitation can be laid at the door of Mrs Thatcher's government. We are not told if there was any arms trade with Argentina between 1979 and 1982 and, if not, why it was stopped. The implications could point to even

A defence of Peter Mandelson (and a rather larger critique)

ROY HATTERSLEY chides Peter Mandelson for not reading a library shelf full of dead political philosophers (Bubble 'n' squeak, February 27), but has clearly himself not even read the full title of Peter's book, *The Blair Revolution — Can New Labour Deliver?* It is not a dry political tract. It is a realistic and practical handbook for New Labour in government and for those keen to help get them there. It is about democratic socialism in the 1990s, not the 1950s that Mr Hattersley seems increasingly to hold as a Golden Age.

Roy is right to think that the election will not be won by advertising copywriters, though I suspect their contribution will be a help to the campaign, unlike that of bitter political essayists. Colin Byrne, Coombe Farm Cottage, Aldens Lane, Godalming, Surrey.

THE New Labour agenda proposed by Peter Mandelson and Roger Liddle is one that many of us who are active workers for the party will feel unable to promote.

Mandelson and Liddle advocate a dynamic market economy, competitive markets, regulation not social ownership of public utilities, no overall planning of the economy, and high reward for top-salaried management. These add up to a Tory economic agenda, which has meant unemployment, growing inequality and a run down of our welfare services. When Labour ditched its pro-common-ownership Clause 4, it deprived itself of a clear socialist economic alternative. Now it refuses to call for the public utilities, including our railway system, to be brought back into social ownership. Is not public ownership, on behalf of the whole community, real stakeholding?

Ron Rizzard, 37 Hollingsworth Road, Potts Wood, Orpington, Kent BR5 1AQ.

THERE is much in the first extract from the book with which I agree, which is hardly surprising, since Roger Liddle and I were in agreement about two-thirds of the time when he was a fellow member of the Liberal Democrats' policy committee.

The problem is the missing link: the traditional Social Democrat preoccupation with economic and social rights without linking their achievement to the redistribution of political power. The Mandelson/Liddle concept of community as quoted, covers the need for a stake in society, especially through employment, the restoration of high-quality public services, and the balancing of rights with obligations. All good stuff. But this very definition of community is incomplete while it fails to incorporate a dispersal of political power through a federal-type written constitution ensuring citizens' empowerment.

Sarah Ludford, 70 St Peter's Street, London N1 6JS.

LACK of historical awareness is a hallmark of New Labour, but I was astounded that Peter Mandelson should advocate marriage loans, a policy usually associated with the Third Reich. Of course, Hitler was not alone in bringing in marriage loans; that great democrat and libertarian Marshall Petain launched a similar scheme in 1940. One wonders if Mandelson so far now consider emulating Mussolini and place a 25 per cent surcharge on income tax for unmarried men between 35 and 50. This adoption of fascist policies on the family is the clearest indication so far of the way the Blairite clique is pushing Labour to the right.

(Dr) Tobias Albee, Department of Historical and Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths' College, London SE14 6NW.

MAYBE the elderly blue-ribose spinsters of Turnbridge Wells will be attracted by Peter Mandelson's future for young people. Young people themselves will not be fooled, and anyone who has any real affection for or meeting of minds with young people will be appalled.

His vision of schools as boot camps, with teachers keeping disruptive and vandalistic youth off the streets with evening and Saturday night detentions, shows what an uninspiring low-life view he has of the world and of the place of education in that world. And does he really imagine that a lifetime of lack of love or mutual respect within the family, and lack of hope for a genuinely uplifting future, can be substituted for by an amateur weekly counselling session with a slightly older ex-pupil who has "made it"?

Take a few Saturday night detentions, Mr Mandelson, and look beyond the workhouse for your inspiration.

Sheema York, 9 Rosehill Road, London SW18.

The long view

ASKED if they would pay an extra £5 a year on their television licence so the BBC could buy more sporting events, 62 per cent of respondents said they would not (Times down for pay-TV, February 23). I wonder if they stopped to consider the alternatives.

BSkyB will charge subscribers an additional tenner to watch the Tyson-Bruno fight. The promoter says the true price should be £20 or more. Does anyone seriously believe Sky's claim that this is "just an experiment"? We have no other plans for pay-per-view," says Sky's deputy managing director. He forgot to add: "for the time being."

Sky's own teletext announcement calls it "a dazzling introduction to pay-per-view for Sky Sports viewers". When a permanently outbid BBC is eventually reduced to showing hopscotch and tiddy-winks, the prospect of paying perhaps £200 or more each year to watch a decent portfolio of sport on satellite is even more dazzling.

A fiver on the licence fee looks like the bargain of the millennium.

(Prof) Ted Wrang, 14 Doriam Close, Exeter EX4 4RS.



The luvvies are losing it

CLAIRE Armitstead (Provo-cations, February 26) has it in her power to banish "luvvies" from your arts pages. Just refrain from publishing half-baked pontification and inane narcissism just because it is uttered by an actor. Fewer thespians would make fools of themselves and the luvvie stereotype would disappear.

John Spence, 38 Earsfield Road, London SW18 3DN.

WILL Claire Armitstead also be banning luvvies' use of the word "philistine" to disparage all outsiders who disagree with them?

Desmet KH10, 13 Packington Hill, Kegworth DE74 2DF.

AN advertisement for a *Castlesperson* in your Media column last week (February 19) ended: "This is a sales job, no luvvies please." Who placed the ad? None other than The Stage.

Charles Morgan, 10 Desmet Road, Bournemouth BH4 9LB.

Sadler's well

MAY I correct the impression that Sadler's Wells may have to forgo a £30 million Millennium grant (Matching funds death may leave embarrassment of lottery riches, February 26). In fact we are currently drawing down £4 million of the grant to complete our designs. We are confident that construction work will start this summer and that, before completion, we will have raised all the necessary partnership funding.

Ian Albery, Chief Executive, Sadler's Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4TN.

Taking a gamble on two teddies

THE Gaming Board of Great Britain and Crown Prosecution Service are petitioning the House of Lords to try to prevent people converting a prize of two small teddy bears into one big one.

They were refused permission to appeal to the Lords when they lost in the Appeal Court. But the Board and the CPS see preventing convertibility of two teddies for one as a matter of great public importance.

They are prepared to spend £20,000 to £100,000 to establish the law — even though it is already perfectly clear, thanks to a judgment by Lord Justice Kennedy, that "trading up" is lawful under the Gaming Act.

BACTA, the trade association of the coin-operated-amusement industry, will fight this all the way on behalf of the member being persecuted by CPS. But we don't

A Country Diary

CHILDRENS. It must be 10 years since I last failed to find a snowdrop open on Candlemas Day, February 2. They aren't truly wild here, and their usual blooming at this Catholic festival (the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin) is a hint that they may well have been introduced to Britain by monastic orders in the Middle Ages, as a floral symbol of purity. Yet even where they are obviously naturalised, they behave unusually like native bulbous species. They escape into ancient woods and old grassland. They edge into damp folds in the land, so that the most subtle contours of low ground seem to be marked out with white tracery. And now they have finally bloomed, two or three weeks late, their sheer persistence is inescapable. Some of our best local colonies have been known for centuries, at Misen Abbey and Lee church, for example. Another dogged group was first recorded in 1849, "in meadows at Bourne End Mill."

The mill has long since been replaced by a motel, but the snowdrops continue to appear, like a layer of frost, amongst the tangled grass round its edges. But our best colonies are around the village of Drayton Beauchamp, where they jostle along the village banks and carpet the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin. It is an apt site. Between 1860 and 1883 the incumbent was Henry Harpur Crews, a distinguished botanist with a penchant for snowdrops. Single and double varieties crowd around the ivy-wreathed Victorian cross that marks his grave. But there is no trace of the green-tinted variety that was named after him or of the pink snowdrop which some parishioners swear they have seen in the village a myth. But then Drayton is a place where, in 1933, I heard a local explain the churchyard's abundant wild garlic by saying: "It does help to keep the Devil out!"

RICHARD MABEY

مكتبة ابن الجوزي

Diary
Matthew Norman

FROM Cardiff comes a fax that readers use speechless with excitement. Boris the Jackal Johnson, the Telegraph enforcer, has been selected, it confirms, as Tory candidate for Clwyd South. God be praised, and who cares if the attached CV is a shade selective, concentrating on education and career at the expense of hobbies (McClung talent night down the Blind Beggar, for the record, and amateur dentistry)? Meanwhile, although Labour's Matt Jones has a majority of 5,000, Tory chairman Ian Reynolds OBE is optimistic. "We are thrilled to have such an eminent journalist as our candidate."

PLEASE God the Jackal is not the mysterious journalist denounced in the Commons last week by Peter Bottomley, the well-meaning but obtuse MP for Eitham. Who can be sure, though, while Bolmondely stays here and the guilty man skulks behind his cloak of anonymity? Yesterday, the finger of suspicion pointed briefly at Lord Deedes and the Mirror's Harry Harris. Those two were cleared. For the rest of us, however, the torture goes on.

GRAHAM Pearcey writes from Surrey about the early attempts of the Halifax to adapt to the new world merged with another building society, the Leeds. He received a letter from general manager Paul Martin, explaining that "over time, we intend to remove some of the duplication". On the same day, Mr Pearcey received a second letter from Paul Martin, reassuring him that "over time, we intend to remove some of the duplication".

THE last word on the Scott report has come, predictably enough, from the ruby-red lips of my friend Elizabeth, a research maverick Tory MP for Batley and Spennings. Last time we met, Mrs Peacock was considering whether to sue herself for libel, but has now turned her laser-like mind to weightier matters. Writing in the Spenborough Guardian, she says: "It is an absolute disgrace that Parliament should spend so much time discussing a report of such size and weight that I could not carry it, never mind read it." How true — and how much longer Parliament might have found had the report been less of a burden to the scales. However, Mrs Peacock's criticisms extend far beyond pounds and ounces; the debates provoked by the report were boring, she insists, and "make bad television".

THE consumer-affairs desk has been contacted by Mr Michael Wint of the London Restaurant Guide, a body offering members discounts on meals and even the occasional free glass of house wine. Mr Wint says he is keen to meet up "to discuss ways in which we can work together... I would like to discuss editorial about our activities." For such editorial, Mr Wint offers a commission on the fees of new members recruited thanks to the article. The Diary is completely corrupt (it intends, for example, to accept the free meal offered by Mr A Latif, Lord of Harpole, whose Newcastle restaurant was plagiarised last week), and is kept to be bribed. The only problem, Mr Wint, is this nonsense about commission. If you can come up with a decent down payment, I think we can do business.

FROM Police Magazine comes yet more encouraging evidence that the constabulary's intellectual standards continue their inexorable climb. A certain PC Reif, on attachment to Telford CID, filled in a form about the suspect's facial hair, and his answers are shown in italics. Type: moustache. Colour: black. Description: top of lips.

IT'S DOLE GOING MULTI-MEDIA.



Military manoeuvres keep us in the dark

Commentary Will Hutton

BRITAIN has just been paid an extraordinary compliment — the more remarkable because of whence it came. President Chirac, launching the biggest shake-up of the French defence effort and strategy for 30 years, told his fellow countrymen that his aim was for France's army to become at least the equal of Britain's within six years. Gaullist France has for long boasted that it is the world's third military power, the starting admission that it lags the British is close to national humiliation.

In the cold-war world where deterrence hinged on a large standing army and nuclear capacity, together with equipment and military-industrial complex, in which the aim was to fight a set-piece war in mainland Europe, France's claim made some sense. But after the Gulf war and Bosnia, underlining

the new importance of the ability to move large numbers of men quickly, and which stretched the French to their limits, France's military stance has seemed more and more outmoded. Last week's dramatic changes were aimed at transforming that strategy.

But they also underline the scale of the opportunity now open to the British, but which will disappear as the French realign their defence effort. Successive defence cuts had threatened the British position, but with the French in the throes of change the defence leadership of Europe is now there for the taking, along with the influence that would bring in the determination of any common European foreign and security policy. Here is an ace that could be played to construct a Europe that more accommodates British interests.

Chirac's moves are at once a recognition of the utility of what has gone before — and a real threat to the emerging relative strength of the British effort. The planned 150,000 reduction in military personnel over six years and the abolition of a security policy. Here is an ace that could be played to construct a Europe that more accommodates British interests.

French intend to build up European collaboration. That means strengthening the defence wing of the EU and, in hard military terms, building up the ties with the Germans in the infant European army — the Euro-corps.

Hence the importance of yesterday's leaked report to the Bundestag's defence committee in which the German defence minister, Volker Rühle, declares that the German army needs to develop a mobile capacity to mirror that of the French. "The essential structural staff and material conditions for taking part in missions in the framework of international crisis management will be created by the year 2000," he says. This was no accidental leak coming as it did a week after Chirac's announcement and the same day that the French and German foreign ministers met in Freiburg to complete the joint Franco-German position that will be presented to the inter-governmental conference, beginning at the end of next month. French and German military co-ordination is moving into a higher gear — and they intend that the rest of us should know about it.

Klaus Kinkel and Hervé de Charette are insistent that the Western European Union, the still weak club that co-ordinates its European members'

defence policies, should become the fully fledged European arm of Nato and responsible to the EU's Council of Ministers. They want a Common Foreign and Security Policy together with its own secretary-general and planning staff, and they aim to build up the Euro-corps so that it can move men and munitions on a scale that currently only the British possess. Moreover they urge more majority voting in Brussels and a definite commitment that those countries that wish to accelerate the integration process will be free to do so — and not subject to the veto of the most reluctant, in other words the British.

With France in the throes of change Europe's defence leadership is there for the taking

natural and political difficulties that the grand talk of integration carefully ignores. Establishing a professional army is not just a technical matter for either the French or Germans; history casts a long shadow over both countries. Charles Millon, the French defence minister, writing in *Le Monde* this week (see page 11), tries to assure the French public that ending conscription need not end the tradition of republican civic virtue established in the Revolution of doing military service to serve the republic. In Germany the concern about professionalising the army is even more deep-

seated; it was professional generals, after all, who served both the Kaiser and Hitler. The British and American confidence that a professional army will never get involved in political coups or influence the political life of the country, says Dr Philip Gordon of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, is just not shared in mainland Europe. A professional Euro-corps is seen as a necessary evil — and Germany in particular is reluctant to part with the amateur, conscript army that has characterised the most successful period of statehood in its history.

It is these fears and apprehensions — along with the sheer gaps in European military competence and capability — that Britain is uniquely equipped to assuage. Nor need the gains of leading Europe's defence effort be solely diplomatic. Europe's defence industry is to be rationalised, with the French actively looking for partners here. It is some juicy deals. And there are concrete steps to be wrung over the Common Agricultural Policy, and even the timing and structure of monetary union, in exchange for British participation in a common European defence effort.

All the way from Clause IV to Corinthians I



David McKie

HALF WAY through Saturday's Guardian extracts from Peter Mandelson's (and Roger Liddle's) new book, I suddenly thought of the Labour Church, an institution from the early days of the Movement more ambitious and elaborate in design than the nowadays more often remembered Socialist Sunday Schools. It began, like so many good things, in Manchester, and spread rapidly through the manufacturing towns of Lancashire and the West Riding, though (rather like Rugby League) it never took root in the South. The Church brought together two kinds of socialist: those who were also devout Christians, and those who were not. It was who simply felt that if you wanted to preach a faith you needed a church.

ing from darkness to light. "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things" is a very weary sentence, though St Paul, or his translators, go one better than Mandelson (and Liddle) by employing the simpler "but".

Above all I found in these sentences an echo of those elements in the liturgy known as verses and responses, where the minister states a proposition and the congregation responds in the words chosen for it. It would be the work of a moment to transform the teachings of Mandelson into verses and responses for a New Labour Church. "The Minister shall say: Whereas the left desired quality of outcome and the right individual liberty to do whatever they pleased. The Congregation shall say: New Labour sets us its goal not an opportunity for all, and special privileges for none. Then shall the Minister say: Whereas the left appeared to argue for rights without responsibilities and the right that one was responsible for oneself alone. The Congregation shall say: New Labour stresses the importance of mutual obligations... And so on.

THERE are further valuable possibilities in the little group of verdicts on Monday's paper, with their unmistakable tone of *Lives of the Saints*. For example, just to emphasise what a Broad Church the Labour Church had its own hymns, whose tunes were often pragmatically pinched from existing hymnals. Like God Save the Working Man, sung to the tune of the National Anthem.

The creed preached by Mandelson (and Liddle) may be entirely secular, yet it seems here and there to have a smack of religious observance about it. That is partly because it calls for such a lot of repentance. Those who over the years subscribed to, or even vaguely supported, Old Labour have clearly been at most grievous fault. They have done those things which they ought not to have done, and left undone those things they ought to have done — like getting rid of what Mandelson (and Liddle) call the "infamous" Clause IV long before the final years of this century. You can catch this spirit most clearly in the long list of paragraphs in Saturday's Guardian setting out "a new synthesis to which all of the centre and left can subscribe", each beginning with the trigger "whereas".

Now "whereas" is lawyer's language, the stuff of binding agreements or even of constitutions, much more than the language of Church. Yet the way it's deployed by Mandelson (and Liddle) irresistibly recalls passages like the one in Corinthians I where the images have to do with pass-

The secret guardians

We must legislate for open government if we are to prevent the dishonesty revealed by Scott, argues Richard Shepherd

IF THE Scott report has one unifying theme, it is secrecy. Sir Richard Scott is critical of the secretive way in which arms-licensing decisions are taken and of the proposition that all "policy" documents, regardless of their contents, must be protected by public interest immunity. Above all, he reminds us how easily and often information is withheld from Parliament and public.

This, in particular, seems to have inflamed his critics, who see nothing unusual about the parliamentary answers that he highlights, and marvel that he does not understand why it is necessary to keep MPs in the dark. Scott does not merely document the incomplete and misleading replies given to parliamentary questions, he spells out the consequences. "In circumstances where disclosure might be politically or administratively inconvenient, the balance struck by the Government comes down, time and time again, against full disclosure," he concludes. "This secrecy 'denies the public the ability to make an informed judgment on the Government's record', 'involves a dilution... of the obligations imposed by ministerial accountability', and 'undermines, in my opinion, the democratic process'."

The answer, though not directly mentioned in the report, leaps out at us: a Freedom of Information Act, giving the public an enforceable right to official information. The point of such an act is that it would be enforced outside Parliament, by a commissioner with the power to make binding orders. Of course, there would be exemptions, covering all the predictable areas: foreign to defence, security, foreign relations, law enforcement, privacy, and so on. But the need to avoid political embarrassment would not be among them. Decisions on disclosure would be isolated from the political factors that obscure the real issues when Parliament deliberates: the need to sustain a controversial policy, protect a threatened minister, deny ammunition to critics, or boost an opinion-poll rating.

The Government will argue that its own open-government reforms mean that such legislation is not needed. There has been a Freedom of Information Act, Ministers are above all politicians, with political instincts. What will those instincts tell them to do when the information sought is so damaging that it would threaten their jobs if made public? A Freedom of Information Act would remove the option of "toughing out" an unwelcome decision. It would apply across the whole public sector (the code does not) and it would override the innumerable statutory prohibitions on disclosure, which an administrative code cannot do. But I believe freedom of information means less accountability, rather than more. It would establish that it is our right as citizens to know what the Government is doing. That government has no option but to be accountable. And that accountability cannot be based on the flexible interpretation of guidelines or the willingness of a parliamentary majority to tolerate lack of frankness — but on a binding obligation set out in law. There is no Freedom of Information Bill before Parliament at present, but in a few days' time another bill which touches some of these themes comes up for debate. Don Tonbig's Public Interest Disclosure Bill would protect from reprisals employees and civil servants who raise concerns about crime, fraud or serious malpractice. They must raise the issue internally first, giving those in charge the chance to put things right. Here too is the principle of accountability, for once those at the top have learnt what is going on, they will be liable for blowing the whistle. He or she must not be acting in bad faith, or trying to make



taken seriously by Whitehall, and the code provides new opportunities for people to take action. But the Government is not obliged to follow the ombudsman's recommendations. Ministers are above all politicians, with political instincts. What will those instincts tell them to do when the information sought is so damaging that it would threaten their jobs if made public? A Freedom of Information Act would remove the option of "toughing out" an unwelcome decision. It would apply across the whole public sector (the code does not) and it would override the innumerable statutory prohibitions on disclosure, which an administrative code cannot do. But I believe freedom of information means less accountability, rather than more. It would establish that it is our right as citizens to know what the Government is doing. That government has no option but to be accountable. And that accountability cannot be based on the flexible interpretation of guidelines or the willingness of a parliamentary majority to tolerate lack of frankness — but on a binding obligation set out in law. There is no Freedom of Information Bill before Parliament at present, but in a few days' time another bill which touches some of these themes comes up for debate. Don Tonbig's Public Interest Disclosure Bill would protect from reprisals employees and civil servants who raise concerns about crime, fraud or serious malpractice. They must raise the issue internally first, giving those in charge the chance to put things right. Here too is the principle of accountability, for once those at the top have learnt what is going on, they will be liable for blowing the whistle. He or she must not be acting in bad faith, or trying to make

money out of a disclosure, and most importantly must be able to persuade a court or tribunal that his disclosure was lawful and justified in the public interest. In some circumstances this may mean limiting the disclosure to a regulatory body; in others a wider publication would be justified. The individual who has acted in the public interest could not be dismissed, or penalised in other ways. Organisations would know that when serious concerns are brought to them they must deal with them properly, and employees would know that the law would protect them for raising such issues. Not least, we the public would stand a better chance of avoiding the tragic accidents and financial scandals that could have been stopped, had the right person blown the whistle at the right time.

Richard Shepherd, Conservative MP for Aldridge Brownhills, voted against the Government in the Scott debate

John Redwood finds plenty in the Mandelson/Riddle book to worry Labour friend and foe alike Left with no beef

IT IS a sign of the times for a Labour MP to team up with a former founder of the SDP to make money out of New Labour. Peter Mandelson and Roger Liddle roll out the platitudes in their new book. Socialists will be left asking, where is the socialism? The rest of us will ask, where is the beef? It's a mixture of hot air and constitutional turmoil. We are offered hot air for training, hot air for higher educational standards, hot air for stakeholding, hot air for more training and hot air for every-one having an opportunity. We are offered regional government, European government and more Whitehall government. We are promised

a strengthened Number 10, a revamped and beefed up Cabinet Office, and superministers leading teams of Cabinet ministers to implement main policies. It is mainly Blair, but there are oases of constitutional approval. There's something for everyone, even for MPs. They are promised better salaries. It is difficult to see why, for the rest of the book is an exercise in the powers and duties of Parliament. Health, education, local government, transport and environment matters would transfer to the new regional assemblies. Control over interest rates, the level of public borrowing and much else besides would pass to the European Central Bank.

There would be plenty more government as a result, but rather less accountability. MPs quizzed by their constituents over why their mortgage was so high or why their firm was closing would refer them to their local MP, who would refer them to their local hospital would not treat them or why a new road was going close to their back door, the MP would have to refer them to the new regional government. New Labour is keen to dump extrovert socialism. They rule out belief that state planning and control produce economic success. Profit is no longer a dirty word. Nationalisation is not the answer to industrial problems. Education, they say, is cru-

cial to success. I heartily agree. Of course more young people need to see education as the ladder to better lives, and need to take advantage of the schools and colleges on offer. Too many children fail to go to the best schools, and an acceptable standard at primary school. Too many then need remedial teaching when they get to secondary school. Peter Mandelson and Tony Blair now say: "Performance must be regularly assessed... Heads must be up to the job. Unsatisfactory teachers — particularly teachers with low expectations of their pupils — must be retrained or removed. There should be zero tolerance of failure." This is all excellent stuff, if a little tougher than I would have dared put it. Why then is Labour in power in most of the education authorities of the country not doing just this? Governing bodies with many Labour representatives, and Labour education authorities, have the power to take just this action. Why are they not doing so? Tony Blair

ought to be able to tackle the problems of education immediately. His party is in power in many places. Why did his party waste so much time opposing tests and publication of test results, when they now think measuring and publishing performance matters? Peter Mandelson's book just opens up the fears of many about New Labour. The true socialist will ask, what's the point of Labour winning if it's not committed to redistribution, nationalisation and state planning? The uncommitted voter will want to know why Labour, already in power in county and borough government, has not done in our schools what it is now promising. Some floating voters will float away again before the election. They are certainly not going to like Labour's view that we should give our country away to Brussels and Frankfurt as a friendly gesture to Chancellor Kohl. The Blair Revolution — Can New Labour Deliver? (Faber, £7.99)

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Anna Larina

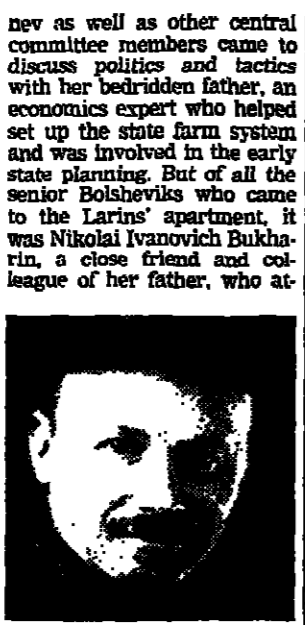
Child of the Revolution

HERE are few happy endings in Russian history, but the life of Anna Larina proved that, for a few, history comes right in the end. For 50 years she was the hidden widow of a forgotten man, Nikolai Bukharin, theoretician of the Russian revolution and member of the Bolshevik central committee who became the most prominent victim of Stalin's purges.

Anna Larina lived to tell the tale — and to deliver Bukharin's final letter to the country he had helped create, and to see him honoured by the Communist Party he had fought to steer away from dictatorship towards socialist humanism. With her death, at the age of 82, the last link to the inner circle of those who made the revolution has gone.

Larina was a true child of the revolution. After her mother's death from tuberculosis, she had been adopted by an aunt, Yelena, and her invalid husband, Yuri Larin. She was looked after by her grandfather while her parents, committed revolutionaries, spent the first world war in exile in Geneva. Only after the 1917 February revolution did they return to Russia. Anna first got to know her father through the letters he wrote to her from Petrograd (St Petersburg) where he was a Menshevik deputy to the Soviet. The fairy tales he wrote for his daughter — of fat mice exploiting skinny workers mice — stuck with her. Larina remained loyal to the 1917 October Bolshevik revolution, and to Marxism, throughout her life. Then, when the revolutionary government moved to Moscow in 1919, she married in with her parents to room 305 in the Hotel Metropol where they remained until 1927.

It was here that she met the leading figures of the revolution: Lenin, Zinoviev, Kame-



Bukharin... executed, 1938

nev as well as other central committee members came to discuss politics and tactics with her bedridden father, an economics expert who helped set up the state farm system and was involved in the early state planning. But of all the senior Bolsheviks who came to the Larins' apartment, it was Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin, a close friend and colleague of her father, who attracted Anna with his games and paintings and the managerie he kept in his room one floor below. Aged 10, Anna was taken to see Lenin's body lying in state and remembers Bukharin who Lenin had called the "golden boy" of the revolution, weeping openly beside the coffin.

A year later she was composing poems to Bukharin. Her father teased her and suggested she take the poem down to Bukharin. Meeting Stalin, she asked him to deliver the letter. The man who acted as a go-between would later destroy the couple's lives.

The 45-year-old Bukharin and the teenage Anna fell in love in 1930 when Bukharin, ousted from the Politburo, stripped of the editorship of Pravda and of his position as head of the Comintern, was already being accused of leading the "rightist Trotskyite

opposition" to Stalin's rapid forced collectivisation and industrialisation.

The 16th Party Congress had intimidated the terror to be waged on old Bolsheviks and rivals to Stalin. Bukharin, aware of the danger, was hesitant about dragging Anna into Kremlin intrigue and factionalism. But her father encouraged Anna to spend time with Bukharin and he told her: "Ten years with Nikolai Ivanovich would be more interesting than a lifetime with anyone else."

When they eventually married in 1934, Anna was plunged into the nightmarish world of Stalin's paranoia where her life and fate, as a Kremlin wife, hinged on that of her husband. The couple moved into the Kremlin apartment Stalin had shared with his wife Nadezhda Alliluyeva before her suicide. Bukharin, then editor of Izvestia, was enjoying a brief period of favour but it was not to last.

When Leningrad party boss Sergei Kirov was assassinated in 1934 — probably on Stalin's orders — Bukharin refused to discuss the matter with his beautiful, dark-haired young bride. Did he know that the 17th Party Congress that year called the "golden boy" of the revolution, weeping openly beside the coffin?

Life with Bukharin was a mixture of politics and amusement. Although he was by then frozen out of the leadership, he continued to contribute to party policy and was involved in drafting the new Soviet Constitution. In her 1933 memoirs *This I Cannot Forget*, Larina shows her husband as a dedicated Bolshevik, loyal to the principles of the revolution, finding time to read French novels with her in their Kremlin apartment and to play practical jokes. In 1936, when Bukharin knew that his outspoken criticisms of party policy would cost him dearly, he went to Paris to



Anna Larina... Stalin delivered her love letter to Bukharin

negotiate the purchase of the Marx archive from former Menshevik colleagues. In the midst of delicate discussions, aware that any sign of disloyalty to Stalin would be reported to Moscow, he took his heavily pregnant wife sightseeing. In Montmartre he did handstands to amuse her. Live, then shut up about Bukharin? Larina did not forget him or the letter addressed to A Future Generation of Soviet Leaders that Bukharin made her memorise before his arrest. She recited it "like a prayer" in the camps and only after her return from Siberian exile in 1959 did she dare write it down.

Larina spent three years in an underground cell in the Lubyanka, then in 1941 she was sent to the Gulag. Released in 1945, she was exiled in Siberia and despite being granted leave to return to Moscow in 1959 she refused

to do so until 1969, when under Khrushchev's amnesty to the victims of Stalin's Terror, she was fully pardoned. Her son, Yuri, brought up in orphanages, finally found his mother in 1958. At first Larina refused to tell him who his father was. He tried to guess: Trotsky? Radek? Kamenov? Zinoviev? When he said Bukharin, Larina replied: "That's it."

Together, the two campaigned quietly for Bukharin's rehabilitation. Letters to the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev were ignored and when she wrote to his successor Leonid Brezhnev in the 1970s, she was told that Bukharin remained a criminal in the leadership's eyes. When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, finally the name of Bukharin and his role in Soviet history could be mentioned again. Larina was interviewed in the weekly

Ogonyok and Bukharin's letter was published in December 1987. The following year the literary journal *Znamya* began the serialisation of her memoirs.

Bukharin was officially rehabilitated on February 4, 1988 and Larina became the centre of media attention, her reminiscences a valuable eyewitness account of the Terror. With Yuri she devoted the rest of her life to preserving Bukharin's memory. In reviewing Bukharin's trial in 1988, a Soviet judge called him "a fighter to the end". So was his widow. She is survived by Yuri and a daughter and son from her second marriage to Fyodor Patsyev, who she met in the camps and married in 1945.

Isobel Montgomery
Anna Larina, born January 27, 1914; died February 24, 1996

Another Day

February 28, 1945: Harold [Nicolson] told us several stories about literary celebrities. In 1919 he dined with Froude, who made H tell him all he had done that day. He did not let him omit one detail, and made him describe events from the beginning. Who called him in the morning? Was the bath water run for him? What razor did he shave with? Did he use lotion? And what was it called? Why this? How that? Virginia Woolf had a similar appetite for little things. Her curiosity was insatiable. She wanted to know what pen nibs office clerks used, and how often they changed their blotting paper. Harold feels sure posterity will always read her for her observations of detail if for no other reason... She had no memory. I told him that Logan Pearsall Smith said *The Mark On The Wall* in her last book, *A Haunted House*, was a direct crib from Thackeray. Harold maintained that all artists plagiarised, and he told the story I have heard before of her being threatened with a libel action for taking a live lady novelist's name for a tombstone inscription in *The Voyage Out*. James Lees-Milne, *Prophecy of Peace*. Faber, 1984.

Birthdays

Peter Alliss, golfer, commentator, 65; Philip Ballhache, Ballif of Jersey, 50; Stephen Beacham, actress, 47; Alfred Burke, actor, 76; Dr Jonathan Clark, historian, 85; Robin Cook, Labour MP, shadow Foreign Secretary, 50; Barry Fantoni, novelist, cartoonist and jazz musician, 86; Tristan Garel-Jones MP, former Conservative minister, 55; Helen Grinter, QC, Crown Court Recorder, 69; Sir Anthony Havelock-Allan, film producer, 82; Maj-General Michael Hobbs, director, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, 58; Prof Susan Iverson, behavioural psychologist, 56; Prof John Irvine, physicist, principal and vice-chancellor, Aberdeen University, 57; Thomas Kemper, Emeritus Professor of Management Studies, Brunel University, 62; Jeremy Lancaster, chairman and managing director, Wolsley, 63; Barry McGilgan, boxer, 38; George Malcolm, pianist, composer, 79; Brian Moore, football commentator, 64; Robin Phillips, actor and director, 64; Peter Stothard, editor, the Times, 45; Sir Brian Urquhart, former assistant secretary-general, UN, 77.

Death Notices

MACDONALD, James George. On 20th February 1996, William, widower, and dearly loved Mother of Linda and the late Barry Macdonald, 76, died peacefully at home, 120 St James Road, London, on 20th February 1996. He was 76. Buried at St James Road Crematorium, London. Family contact: Mrs J. Macdonald, 120 St James Road, London, SE15 6JH. Tel: 0181 493 2135 or 0181 493 2171.

WATLEY, On February 28th 1996 after a struggle against cancer, RICHARD JOHN, 65, son of Mrs M. Watley, died peacefully at home, 120 St James Road, London, on 28th February 1996. He was 65. Buried at St James Road Crematorium, London. Family contact: Mrs J. Watley, 120 St James Road, London, SE15 6JH. Tel: 0181 493 2135 or 0181 493 2171.

Birthdays

TOM: Happy Birthday and get better soon. Love from an old mate.
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Hugh Lamprey

Made in Africa

THE moment Hugh Lamprey, who has died aged 67, set foot in Africa, that continent was to be his life. He had already travelled to Iceland, the Himalayas and the Canaries on student expeditions, had been born in Egypt, and had served in Palestine and Egypt as a tank officer (tanks being "great" for watching birds), but that first job as biologist at Tanzania's game department seemed to settle the matter. Thenceforth, save for returning to Oxford for a D Phil and to Devon in retirement, the continent of Africa — notably its eastern part — gave him home and business.

When an undergraduate at Oxford he had seemed (to this contemporary) to be one more bright-eyed, diligent and unexciting student, most notable for his quiet walk and deep voice. But Africa, although it did nothing for the walk or the voice, built Hugh Lamprey.

This was most noticeable at the famous Arusha conference of 1961. All manner of distinguished conservationists were to their honour Tanzania and Serengeti for, as it were, a final look at the animal treasurehouse about to be dis-

membered. At one point, they stood around a dead rhino which had been speared by Maasai. The gloom was considerable but Hugh was engaged. He was engaged for the future, knowing that the past — with Africans resentful that their big game had become big business for pale-faced foreigners — had been none too perfect.

Pursing his enthusiasm into action, he became the first principal of the College of African Wildlife Management (at Mweka in Tanzania). In the next 30 years this institution was to train 2,500 game wardens from 25 nations. In 1968, Hugh left to become director of the Serengeti Research Institute, where many world-famous behaviourists and ecologists worked.

They were a skilled and demanding group who needed careful handling. Tanzania's government has, alas, not been as wise as Hugh had originally expected, and the SRI has suffered accordingly, causing him disappointment. He left in anger — as was his way.

East Africa is rich with anecdotes concerning Lamprey: such as the time he landed his Piper Cub aeroplane on the Kilimanjaro "beadles" between the peaks of Kibo and Mawenzi. For take-off from this altitude of 16,000 feet, a group of Mweka students were asked to hold the tail for as long as possible — and did so too effectively, causing the propeller to hit the ground. Lamprey bashed the damaged blades back into shape with



Wildlife expert... Lamprey

rocks, altered instructions to the ground crew, and was soon flying back to base.

On another occasion, when landing near Lake Victoria, he heard popping but did not realise trigger-happy frontier guards were shooting his way. A truckful of militia quickly surrounded him, asked for identification, received it correctly, and were then told how best to shoot down aircraft.

For the second half of his working life Hugh was based in Nairobi, working for Unesco, Unep, WWF, and IUCN, the organisations which promote conservation in all its forms. For a lifetime dedicated to this cause he was awarded the Order of the Golden Ark in 1987, and various others, including the OBE in 1992.

He was most happily married for 42 years, and has a son following in his footsteps and currently working in Uganda, and a daughter, Hugh officially retired in 1992, but at the slightest excuse would be back in his beloved continent without a moment's hesitation.

Anthony Smith
Hugh Francis Lamprey, ecologist, born August 2, 1928; died February 10, 1996

Letters

Michael J. Smith writes: Being a biologist at Tanzania's game department in 1960, I worked in St Pancras branch libraries, operating under postwar austerity but subject to the forward-looking policies of Kenneth Robinson (obituary February 21). Almost on the site of the new British Library, was the Duxton Road branch, in a converted single-storey shop. Up at Turnell Park, a Victorian house had been taken over. There, after school, children would sit in their own section of the library or, in fine weather, out on the patio in the garden, to be read to by one of the library staff. This routine was yet another example of the enlightened cultural policies pursued by Kenneth Robinson's St Pancras.

Ayoola writes: IK Dairo's passing (obituary February 24) will be sorely felt in Nigeria. The music of *Baba Aladuru* (prayer man), as he was known was one of the few uplifting aspects of life in an otherwise depressing Nigeria, from independence to date.

Ceraldine Cook writes: I was a Penguin Books editor in the seventies and eighties when Roger Omond (obituary February 14) was our official adviser on South Africa. His judgement led to the publication of some crucially important books. His approach to the Penguin Special, *The Apartheid Handbook*, a complex work laying out its day-to-day reality, was typical of Roger. Simply, clearly, and without comment he completed the tight three-month schedule to the day; it sold in its thousands. He flew the flag of truth, whether writing about apartheid or his own fight against cancer.

The Duke of Atholl

Arms and the man

THE 10th Duke of Atholl, who has died at the age of 64, was the only man in Western Europe still licensed to raise a private army. He inspired rumours of a march on Westminster in 1978, when Parliament was debating the Scottish devolution bill. But George Iain Murray, a bachelor nicknamed "wee Iain" because he was 6ft 5 inches tall, was at heart a painfully shy, scrupulously polite pacifist dedicated to preserving his rolling acres.

"I'm quite well-suited to have a private army because I'm completely unarmoured," he said. "I could certainly mobilise it — but I couldn't do much after that."

He delightedly exploited his right, granted under decree by Queen Victoria during a visit to Blair Castle in the 1840s, as a prime attraction which drew 185,000 visitors a year to his home.

His 60-strong regiment, the Atholl Highlanders, has 12 pipers and eight drummers. Only local landowners can be officers; rank and file have traditionally been drawn from estate workers. For a generous fee, they have been on hire as stewards for the royal wedding and other publicity events.

They have the right, rarely exercised, to march through Edinburgh with bayonets fixed. Their cannon fire does little more than break windows at the family seat near Pitlochry, a white stucco building which has been com-



Wee Iain... polite pacifist

pared with a Disneyland gingerbread fortress.

Their ancestors were warriors. The old clan chieftains of Blair controlled the main route through the central highlands between Perth and Inverness. Runners carried fiery crosses through the countryside to marshal them.

They mustered for the crusades, for Robert the Bruce, for Charles II, for Bonnie Prince Charlie, against the American war of independence and raised 4,000 men against the union of Scotland with England.

George Murray, who reckoned he could trace his ancestry back to the Picts, was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. When he inherited the dukedom, he was an obscure junior executive in London.

He rose to be chairman of the provincial newspaper group Westminster Press in its less dynamic years from

1974-93 and a director of Pearson Longman, part of the media group Pearson, between 1975 and 1983. He was also chairman of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, president of the Scottish Landowners Federation, a member of the Red Deer Commission and president of the National Trust for Scotland.

An Arab prince once flew uninvited into his grounds with an auctioneer, eager to buy the estate. People had been advising him to sell, but one of his last acts was to safeguard his inheritance for perpetuity.

The estate and land were due to pass to a distant cousin, John Murray, a land surveyor in the South African Transvaal. In the early 1980s, the Duke invited his kinsman to stay. Mr Murray, reportedly, was unimpressed by the Scots climate and weather. Wee Iain then vested Blair Castle and much of his land, thought to be worth £140 million, in a charitable trust in the name of an 11-year-old half nephew. This leaves John Murray to inherit the title only. The South African Murrays initially spoke of contesting this in court. But yesterday it looked as if the game of the Picts had once again carried the day.

John Ezzard
George Iain Murray, 10th Duke of Atholl, Earl of Tullibardine, Lord Gask and Balquhiter, Viscount Glenlyon, and other Scots titles, born June 19, 1931; died February 27, 1996.

Jackdaw



Dear Deng

I HEAR THAT I can just change my way of thinking, your Lordship might even stoop to grant me mercy. Now, of course people's thinking is always subject to change, but if you're asking me to change my basic values, well, my ideas are the fruit of long-term hardship and reflection, and you're asking too much.

Oct 6, 1992

YOUR problem is that you have too much ambition, too little talent, and you're narrow-minded. Mixing these elements together in a person with as much power as your-

self can have only bad results — for you and for China. My problem is that I have little ambition and no particular talent, but at least I'm wide open to different ideas.

July 6, 1997

You say, "We are not afraid of pressure, we are not afraid of going it alone, no one has the right to interfere in our domestic affairs." You unscrupulous schemer! Do you think that treating the people of China as a joke makes you some kind of hero?

It's time to loosen the strings. You and your family are facing dire problems. You're no better than an ancient patriarch.

Who are your real friends? Is it those who circle you for handouts? Is it those foxes and dogs who snap at your feet and yelp for money?

November 11, 1989

YOUR lust for power, your lust for greatness, should be more fully satiated now than in the past. You're no longer at an age where you can devote all your energy to public issues. If you mess things up

now, you may undo your genuine accomplishments.

So it's time to make way for younger people and use your fading energy to do good to yourself in your old age. If you want to maintain your stature, that's the best thing to do.

April 2, 1992

From a series of letters to Chinese ruler Deng Xiaoping written by imprisoned dissident Wei Jingsheng. *Jingsheng passed the letters to a friend in 1984, shortly before beginning a lengthy prison term. They were smuggled out of China to Philip J. Cunningham. From the New York Times.*

Smoke, no fire

THE EDITOR guy at Mother Jones asked me to do some Los Angeles "cigar bars" to see what they were like. First I read several articles on the subject. They all claimed that cigar smoking is sweeping the nation, with the female cigar-smoking population growing the fastest.

Cigar aficionados magazine contained an article listing the hottest spots around LA

to smoke cigars. I couldn't find them. Occasionally I found the venues themselves, but I never found them teeming with patrons. A woman at one of the restaurants said, "We're not a cigar bar, but if we're empty, people can smoke cigars." I began to put it together: Cigar aficionados might have a vested interest in hyping a cigar craze that doesn't exactly exist.

I went returning to some of the places, figuring I just wasn't going at peak hours. The site of my first successful infiltration was the bar at the swanky Peninsula Hotel... I sat near a gaggle of men struggling with cigars the size of baseball bats wedged in their mouths. They looked like those circus acts who balance chairs on their chins... The cigar smokers I ran across did seem pretentious and stupid, especially the women. I saw one woman choking on a puff. She looked like she was thinking, "This can't possibly be what every-one is doing."

The Cigar Monthly... had an article by a woman describing how she realised

smoking cigars was "something my fiancé and I could enjoy together, something interesting and different." You'd think she would have noticed that they had so little they could enjoy together before they got engaged. They probably went from months of uncomfortable silence to such stimulating conversation as:

"Honey, are you puffing?"
"Yes, I'm puffing."
"I don't even date, but I feel safe in counselling that if you see cigar smoking as a beacon of hope for interaction with our fiancé, you've unearthed a fairly severe short-coming in the relationship. It might be a good time to go back over the guest list for your wedding and eliminate the groom."

Paula Poundstone chokes on the hype of the cigar industry for her regular column in the American political magazine Mother Jones.

Heaven scent

WE WATCHED the men and their dogs go to work. The men had dog biscuits in one

pocket; they put truffles in the other. I wondered if they ever made an expensive mistake... We hunched our shoulders and folded our arms and shivered as Mandarine, Rocchia's dachshund, picked up the scent. Any breed or mongrel can be trained... [It] is the quickest way to add value to a mutt. But ultimate performance is individual. The controlled collaboration between mas-

Prospect
WILL BEAR FLX
Sniff sniff... Prospect

ter and dog, with no barking, no excess digging, no wasted energy, is intense.

Mandarine, quivering with dilutive intelligence, was not up to scratch because this oak grove was not her usual patch. "Cherches, Mandarine, cherches!" "Où elle est? Où elle est?" Rocchia's whispered encouragements might have whipped up a mild sexual fervour in all of us, but it not been for the wind. Mandarine trembled and scurried and tunneled. Suddenly Rocchia was on his knees beside her. She stepped aside to let him finish. What a delicate job! He scooped up the cold, friable soil and sank his face into it. "Ah, small bear!" He held up the precious black growth, his nose shaded by a chestnut smear of earth. Encircling him, we waited for initiation...

Old postcards show the truffle-hunters working with pigs. Pigs dig deeper than dogs, but they also like truffles. They can break a man's arm, or sever a finger, to keep their find. Getting them into the car is another drawback. You will be hard put to find a truffling

pig in Provence today. All of us from London were sad about this, because we had been led to expect one, but "Le cochon est mort," declared Rocchia — so that was that... There were some fine specimens to hand now, and it's time to eat... Rocchia relaxes over the wine and reflects upon his part-time life as a rabbi. (*Une rabasse* is the local name for truffle, and it's derogatory.) He says that the hunt for the truffle is probably a greater pleasure than getting it. True. Truffle-hunting is a passion, ambivalent for all concerned, often practised under difficult conditions, but compelling and addictive.

Lesley Chamberlain takes a trip from London to Provence in search of the "black diamond". From Prospect magazine.

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Finance Guardian

Record £2bn for Barclays

Roger Cowe

BARCLAYS yesterday continued the strong profit performance from the banks, breaking the £2 billion barrier for the first time to earn what chief executive Martin Taylor described as "a return that is very high by historical standards".

The bank's staff union, Unifi, leapt on the results as buttressing its pay claim. Yesterday, it revealed that 85 per cent of members had turned down a pay offer from Barclays which it said was worth 2.8 per cent.

The union has asked for a minimum of 3.2 per cent to keep pace with annual inflation up to the end of January. It also wants less overtime and a minimum pay level in line with the "European decency threshold".

Unifi assistant general secretary, Iain MacLean, said yesterday: "There are 17,000 staff paid below the decency threshold. In a bank that's making more than £2 billion profit, that is absolutely scandalous."

Mr MacLean said the results would strengthen his members' resolve in resisting the pay offer, despite last year's abortive national strike which failed to force a higher offer out of the bank. The ballot result yesterday showed that 55 per cent of union members were in favour of moving to a strike ballot.

Chairman Andrew Buxton said he was confident a settlement could be reached without another strike, and promised that most staff would be better off as a result of the total pay offer.

He was non-committal, however, on claims from the banking union Bifu that 10,000 jobs were at risk between now and the end of the



Telling smiles... Barclays chief executive Martin Taylor (left) and chairman Andrew Buxton, confident staff will not strike

PHOTOGRAPH BY HAMILTON WEST

decade. "It may be a reasonable estimate," Mr Buxton said. But he added: "The trend of numbers will be downwards from the impact of technology. But there will be more people in technology, more in banking services and more in investment banking. I can't give

overall figures because we haven't got them." The major branch closure programme has come to an end, however. Only a handful of branches were closed last year and the same will apply in 1996.

The bank's resistance to higher salaries will have been buoyed by City concerns that its cost base has been expanding too fast. Total costs rose by 8 per cent last year, although that was away from British Gas such as redundancy, and the rate of increase fell to 3 per cent in the second half of the year.

Concern about costs and disappointment that the bank did not initially announce plans to buy back shares, led to Barclays share price falling yesterday morning.

But a buy-back was announced in the afternoon. Barclays used just over £300 million of its spare cash to buy 40 million shares, or 2.5 per cent of the total, repeating last year's exercise.

Kvaerner sees Trafalgar as global launch-pad

Analysts say HongKong Land holds key, while shares rise to nine-month high in expectation of an offer, writes **Tony May**

TRAFALGAR House yesterday had a bid approach from Kvaerner, the Norwegian conglomerate which narrowly failed to buy the Amec construction group in December.

Trafalgar, the struggling engineering and construction group best known for its Cunard cruise ships, including the QE2, announced that Kvaerner had expressed an interest in making a bid but "only with the recommendation of the board".

The statement came after a welter of stock market speculation pushed Trafalgar's share price up to a six-month high. Analysts said Kvaerner may have to pay more than £1 billion this time.

A Trafalgar spokesman said he expected Kvaerner to make a formal offer soon. The Norwegian group confirmed that it was pursuing talks with a view to "exploiting

business opportunities", and had not bought any shares.

The key to the bid is held by HongKong Land which has a 26 per cent stake. Last night it said it would be guided by the advice of the Trafalgar board.

Confirmation of the approach pushed Trafalgar's ordinary shares up 8p to a nine-month high of 47p, with 12 million shares changing hands. The day ended with the group's ordinary shares valued at nearly £500 million, and the preference shares £300 million.

Some analysts said Trafalgar could be worth more than 80p a share, valuing it at £540 million. They stressed that the level of the bid would be more or less fixed by how much HongKong Land was prepared to take for its stake.

— assuming it wanted to sell. HongKong Land was said to be keen to find a way out of a business which has cost it a

lot of money. SGST Securities analyst Zafar Khan said: "They were looking for a vehicle. They found one with flat tyres and a blown up engine."

Analysts said the prize for Kvaerner was Trafalgar's contracting and engineering units, John Brown Engineers & Constructors, and Davy International.

It is doubtful whether Kvaerner would want Cunard or Trafalgar's UK commercial property, but it does want to develop its businesses beyond northern Europe. Trafalgar House would take it to the US and the Far East, and add gas turbine technology.

In December, Trafalgar reported a pre-tax loss of £231 million for the year to September 30. The results cost a share, valuing it at £240 million. They stressed that the level of the bid would be more or less fixed by how much HongKong Land was prepared to take for its stake.

— assuming it wanted to sell. HongKong Land was said to be keen to find a way out of a business which has cost it a

Geoffrey Gibbs

THE planned introduction of open competition into the supply of domestic gas in the south-west of England has been delayed for a month to process licence applications and test computer systems.

Aspiring suppliers have for some time been courted by the 500,000 consumers in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset with a wide range of incentives in the hope of persuading them to switch away from British Gas when the pilot project gets under way.

Opening up of the market had been expected to begin on April 1. But Energy Minister Tim Eggar said yesterday that on the recommendation of Ofgas, the gas industry watchdog, the move would not take place until April 29.

He said the four-week delay would allow time for the thorough processing of licence applications and would ensure that administrative and computer sys-

tems were ready. "It is a complex procedure, and we need to get it as right as possible before 'going live' with consumers."

News of the deferral came as yet another would-be supplier has shown its hand in a bustling market where existing rivals include SwebGas, Amerasia Hess, Total and a consortium made up of Calor and Texaco.

British Fuels, the coal, oil and gas supplier established late last year in a management buyout from British Coal, said it would be offering consumers annual savings of up to £200 and a package that includes no standing charges.

It is also dangling the carrot of £150 off the cost of a holiday for those who sign up within the next four weeks.

British Gas, which has deliberately withheld announcing its own tariff proposals until it sees what competitors are offering in terms of price and service, said yesterday that it would have been ready for an

April 1 start-up. But John Kent, director of business development at British Gas Supply, said that if a short delay ensured competition could be introduced in an orderly fashion, the company supported the Ofgas decision.

Hard selling of the new packages on offer in the region has already caused controversy with SwebGas, one of the earliest declared entrants, coming under fire recently from the Gas Consumers' Council.

Competitors have been promising savings of up to 20 per cent on existing gas bills, with Calortex anticipating the delay in the start-up date — guaranteeing recently that its projected savings would be backdated to the beginning of April.

Competition in the domestic market will be extended next year from the three western counties to include a further 1.5 million homes in the south-east of England before embracing the whole of the country in 1998.

BSkyB shares soar as French stakeholder plans demerger

Paul Murphy

SPECULATION that another founder of satellite television group BSkyB might be looking to sell its shareholding raged again yesterday as Chargeurs, the French conglomerate, announced it was splitting in two.

Rumours ran through the stock market at reports that the French group was about to issue a statement. Shares in BSkyB surged to 420p at one stage — up 37p — with Japanese electronics and media group Sony seen as a likely buyer for the French company's 17 per cent holding.

Later Chargeurs said it would be demerging its television, cinema and newspaper interests into a new company — named *Falbe* after a 19th century French pioneer. The rump of the group's interests, spreading from textiles to transport, will be retained by Chargeurs.

Shares in BSkyB finally settled at 388p, up 5 1/2p, but rumours that a disposal of the French holding was being planned refused to die down. Media specialists have been waiting for such a move since

Teenagers who work while studying fare worse at exams

Sarah Ryle

THE rising number of teenagers supplementing pocket money with part-time work is damaging exam results, according to a report published yesterday.

A study of 16- to 18-year-olds found that teenagers working between six and nine hours a week, the average number, did 25 per cent less well than their non-working peers, gaining an average two O-level or CSE Grade 1 passes

against two and a half. The research was published by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, an economic think-tank.

The proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds in full-time education managing part-time jobs rose to 59 per cent in 1988-89 compared to 40 per cent in 1986-71.

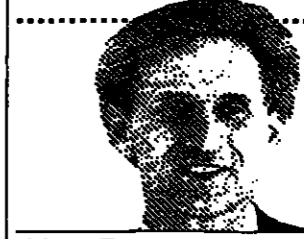
The authors found, however, that part-time work did not affect wage levels later on in life. They used the National Child Development Study (NCDS) which tracked the progress of 4,000 people born in 1958 at 16, 23 and 33.

There was also little evidence to suggest that family wealth put financial pressure on children to go out to work while still at school. Using data from the annual Family Expenditure Survey, the study showed that the children of unemployed parents were less likely to work part-time while at school than other children.

Part-time jobs could bring advantages in terms of work experience, the authors suggested. *Earning and Learning, Fiscal Studies February 1996, IFS, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E.*

Notebook

Greasing wheels for easier ride



Alex Brummer

BRINGING Railtrack to the stock market has not been the easy ride of some earlier privatisations. A year ago, the Government was forced to back down on the charges which Railtrack would make to the franchisees after it became clear that the rates of return would not be sustainable. This at a stroke halved the likely flotation returns. More recently, there has been great concern to show that the franchisees can be successfully put in the commercial sector so that the published projections, on flotation have some credibility in the marketplace.

The remaining obstacle to the sell-off has been debt levels. British Rail boss Bob Horton has maintained strongly throughout the transition that if Railtrack is to have a chance in the private sector then it cannot carry the current £1.5 billion on its books. The Government, fearful of what the Opposition will make of a huge new paper subsidy at this late stage (the prospectus and book building will be underway by late April), has balked. Now a crafty way has been found of squaring the circle. Railtrack's debt will be pared back to £589 million — which means the Treasury taking a £1 billion book hit — in return there has been a promise that Railtrack will plough up more than half-a-billion pounds into upgrading cross-London lines through Thameslink 2000, with the Government putting £100 million into the pot.

With Railtrack in the private sector, relatively unencumbered by debt, it should find the new capital requirement relatively easy given the promise of extra income from running some 24 trains an hour in each direction against the current six.

The Government's retreat on Railtrack debt, with the promise of extra earnings, already is being seen as positive for the flotation. Estimates in the past have suggested that the Treasury would raise around £1.5 billion from flotation — that figure is now moving to £1.7 billion and onwards. At that level, Railtrack could make the Footsie, vital in terms of attracting some fund management interest. This will all no doubt be great for investors and frustrated London travellers: but as for the taxpayer they might wonder why the Treasury/Transport department has bothered.

Kvaerner rescue

HAVING failed to board Amec in last year's contested takeover, Kvaerner group has now emerged as a possible white knight for Trafalgar House's

redundancies and the possible relocation of some of the employees. Last night Shorts simply said it was maintaining contact with Fokker's administrator.

Until recently it looked as though Bombardier would be fighting the South Korean company's bid for Fokker. As Dutch industrialists called for fresh state loans and domestic banking support, Fokker last night insisted it could still go it alone as a profitable concern.

The Canadian company, announcing its last-minute pull out, said the prospect of buying Fokker was too risky.

"It had nothing to do with government support, that was not an issue," said Mr Lord. "We did an evaluation of the company, its assets operations and programmes and found that it was too risky."

Ulster plane jobs fear after Bombardier drops Fokker bid

Claire Trevena in Toronto

UP to 1,500 workers in Northern Ireland's Short Brothers could be laid off following the decision by the Canadian firm, Bombardier, not to bid for the Dutch aircraft manufacturer, Fokker.

A sixth of the Short's workforce constructs wings for the F70 and F100 series. And while Bombardier, Shorts parent company, hopes the programme to build those planes can continue it has given notice of the lay-offs.

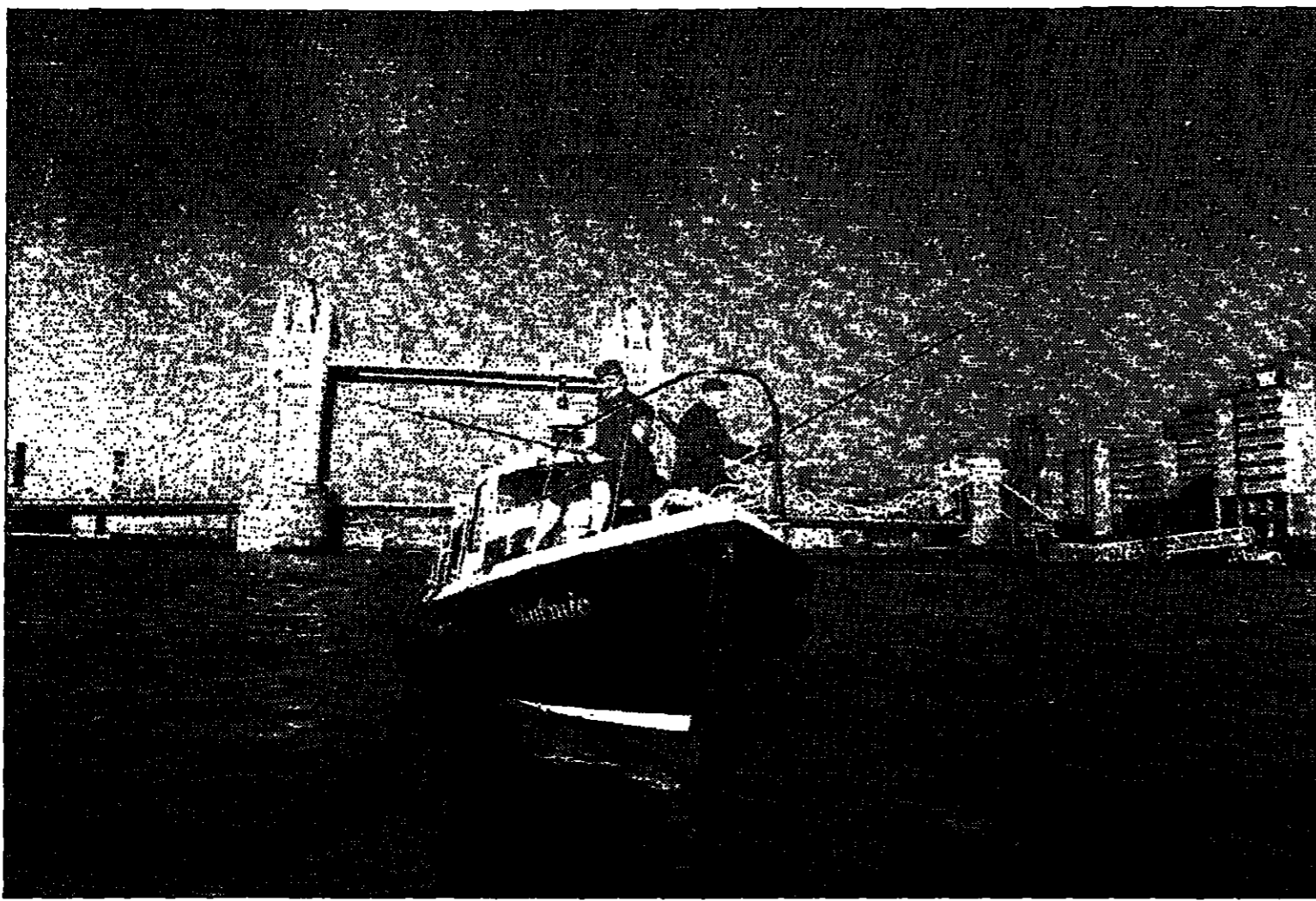
"We are still hoping the Fokker programme can continue for some time," said Bombardier company spokesman Michel Lord. "We have orders for aircraft and if they can continue delivering aircraft we can continue producing the wings."

Bombardier said if demand for those stops, there will be

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Finland 0.87	Israel 4.73	Saudi Arabia 5.75	USA 1.5075

Source: The Institute of Bankers, excluding Indian rupee and Israeli sheqel



Clear blue... Thames Water yesterday received an award for its seven-year programme to clean up the River Thames, now the world's cleanest metropolitan river. The project cost £550 million. The award was given by the National Rivers Authority and other groups PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY WEAVER

Get Britain on the other side to win in Brussels

Workforce/UK trade unions find way to gain support on the European stage. Julie Wolf and Seumas Milne report

ONE fail-safe way to win set-piece battles in Brussels is to make sure the British government is on the other side. This month's decision by the European Commission to scrap plans — which would have watered down worker protection when jobs are contracted out — is a prime example. It also shows how British trade unions are fighting, and often winning, domestic scraps on the European stage.

The focus of the controversy was the bureaucratic-sounding 1977 EU Acquired Rights Directive, which guarantees that workers keep the same wages and conditions when they are transferred to a new employer. It also requires employers to deal with worker representatives during transfers, bolstering the position of trade unions.

Known in Britain as Tupe — Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) — the legislation has been successfully used by unions to challenge the British government's attempts to drive down costs in the public sector by contracting-out and market-testing. And the courts in both Britain and EU have upheld compensation claims by public-sector workers forced to choose between

issues. Given its repeated efforts to block adoption of EU labour legislation and the opt-out from the Maastricht Treaty's social chapter, other EU countries are reluctant to offer Britain any favours.

The Trades Union Congress, working through the European TUC, lobbied extensively against the Commission's proposed change. The campaign won support not just from the TUC's socialist allies, but also Christian Democratic politicians.

At the European Parliament, Stephen Hughes, Labour MEP for Durham and chairman of the Social Affairs Committee — strongly backed up by the GMB general union — mobilised opposition to the Commission's proposed amendment. By getting the Christian Democratic European People's Party on board, Mr Hughes and the unions ensured overwhelming support for a resolution calling on the Commission not to undermine the 1977 legislation. Faced with this onslaught, Mr Flynn fell on his sword.

Unice, the European employers' federation, which had pressed for the change, was furious, while John Monks, TUC general secretary, said it "exposed the fallacy of the British government's assertion that in the social field the argument in Europe is going its way". A Commission official blames the British government's negotiating tactics for alienating potential support.

News in brief

Life growth makes insurer GA hopeful

GENERAL Accident, the Perth-based insurer, yesterday reported a bare increase in profit from its insurance operations. Pre-tax profits rose by 11 per cent to \$569 million, but only because of higher gains on the sale of investments. The group is proposing a 7 per cent increase in the dividend and chief executive Bob Scott was confident about 1996, partly because of the growing life insurance operations.

GA has just acquired Provident Mutual to expand its pensions activities. Last year, the group's life business earned premiums of just £1.5 billion, compared with £4.4 billion in general insurance. The UK remained the only territory to record a profit on insurance underwriting. — Roger Coote

Shotts workers fight on

WORKERS at the Cummins Engine Company plant at Shotts, Lanarkshire, yesterday unanimously rejected closure plans which threaten 700 jobs. They promised a "wide-ranging campaign" uniting Scottish politicians and trade unionists pledged to reverse the closure decision announced a week ago. The workers' stance sets them on course for conflict with their American employers who want to close Shotts as part of plans to slim their international 27,000 workforce by 2,000.

The Indiana-based company employs 5,000 in Britain. A mass meeting at the 40-year-old plant condemned the company's "lack of consultation and consideration" and its failure to explore alternatives to closure. Workers called on the engineering union AEEU, which has 500 members at Shotts, to ballot on industrial action. — Maryn Hall

Telegraph profits hit

THE Telegraph, the national newspaper group headed by Conrad Black, has been hit hard by rising newspaper costs and the price/circulation war. Profits for 1995 fell by almost £10 million to £25.5 million. But Mr Black was optimistic about the future after a very difficult year. He said: "1996 was a year of unrelenting challenges for the Telegraph. But at the end of it, the company emerged fitter and stronger."

The company said newspaper prices and magazine paper costs in the last quarter of 1995 were 50 per cent higher than a year before. Overall, 1995 newspaper costs rose £12 million. The rises came as newspapers remained locked in a price war unleashed by Rupert Murdoch's News International titles in 1993. However, the Daily Telegraph increased its cover price by 10p last year to its current 40p.

Taxman raids German bank

COMMERZBANK'S Frankfurt headquarters and branches in three other cities were raided yesterday by tax authorities looking for evidence that the bank helped customers shift funds to avoid paying taxes. Rainer Schilling, chief prosecutor for the Frankfurt prosecutor's office, said that transfers to Luxembourg, Gibraltar and Switzerland are the subject of the investigation. More than 200 investigators took part in the surprise raid, which started at 8am and continued throughout the day. "We don't think any of our employees are guilty," said Dennis Phillips, a Commerzbank spokesman. "If a client wants to shift money, we don't ask them if they've reported it to tax authorities. It's up to the client."

400 meat jobs to go

AROUND 400 Harris meat workers are expected to lose their jobs when one of the country's largest producers of bacon and sausages closes a 220-year-old factory at Ipswich, Suffolk. Dairy group Unigate has agreed in principle to buy the entire Harris operation, but this will not save the Ipswich factory. Negotiations on redundancies are taking place with unions.

The closure follows a general decline in the popularity of meat in recent years — fuelled partly by concerns about health. Pig farmers have also complained about rival producers in other European countries receiving unfair subsidies from their governments.

Sabena chief appointed

SWISSAIR yesterday consolidated its control over Sabena when a senior official of the airline was named as chief executive officer at Belgium's troubled national carrier. Paul Reutlinger, who moves from Swissair to take the helm at Sabena, said he was ready to take on competition from Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic Airlines, which is considering taking a controlling stake in Euro Belgian Airlines, a small operator that runs low-cost flights.

His appointment followed the resignation of Pierre Godfroid as chief executive and chairman. A Belgian Christian Democrat, Jan Huyghebaert, was named as board chairman. The changes are aimed at breaking the deadlock between Sabena management and trade unions over cost-cutting moves demanded by Swissair. Sabena also announced that net losses narrowed to £1.8 million last year from £27.2 million in 1994. — Julie Wolf in Brussels

\$10.8bn cable deal

THE US West Media Group is buying Continental Cablevision in a \$10.8 billion deal. The takeover will make US West the third largest cable operator after Time Communications Inc and Time Warner and will give it 4.7 million cable subscribers. The acquisition is the largest in the cable industry since the telecommunications bill passed earlier this month and analysts believe it could start a wave of mergers.

One US analyst said it was in line with recent cable deals with US West paying around \$2,300 per subscriber. US West is paying \$5.3 billion in stock and cash and assuming another \$5.5 billion in debt and other obligations. US West has 500,000 cable TV subscribers and has a 26 per cent interest in Time Warner Entertainment, which has cable systems, Home Box Office and Warner Brothers films.

Strong profits for building societies augur rate cuts

Teresa Hunter and Cliff Jones

SEVERAL top 20 building societies are poised to follow the Nationwide and cut 0.5 per cent off their borrowing rates, following a clutch of financial results showing strong profits growth despite a weak housing market.

Nationwide, Britain's second largest building society, last week announced plans to slash the cost of borrowing to a 30-year low of 6.99 per cent.

The defensive move was taken as part of Nationwide's struggle to remain a customer-owned mutual organisation, rather than be forced to follow the Halifax, Woolwich and Alliance & Leicester and convert to being a publicly owned bank.

The Stratton Building Society, which yesterday reported a 56 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £27 million last year said it would announce a drop in its mortgage rate within seven days.

The Coventry, which increased its mortgage lending

by 6 per cent to £476 million last year, said it will shortly announce a membership giveaway bonus scheme — probably by reducing the cost of borrowing.

The Chelsea, which posted an 8 per cent rise in profits to £28 million, indicated it would wait for rates to settle before falling into line.

The Bradford & Bingley, Britain's fifth biggest building society set the ball rolling when it recently announced a \$50 million package of benefits to members, including lower mortgage rates. It reported a 10 per cent increase in profits to £11.8 million.

US building society analyst Rob Thomas warned: "These results show that a number of medium-sized building societies have a solid base from which to begin cutting margins in favour of customers, which will hit the banks hard if they are forced to follow."

But the think-tank Demos urged that building society members should be allowed to allocate a tenth of their "conversion" windfalls to a community endowment fund that

would benefit housing projects and charitable schemes.

David Shutt, author of a report published today, said the scheme would be in tune with the original aims of the former mutuals, which could maintain their role by literally "building society".

The windfalls generated by the conversion of the Woolwich, National & Provincial, Halifax and Alliance & Leicester to public companies would amount to £15 billion, he said. The proposed fund could be as much as £2 billion.

He warned that the race for societies to become plc's could continue and it made sense for a movement which was created for the good of its community to invite members to make a return contribution.

John Cairns, director of corporate affairs at the Alliance & Leicester, dismissed the proposals.

He said that Demos was acting too late and Alliance members will choose to take all of their windfall adding, "people love mutuality, but not as much as a cheque for £500".

Wimpey bets heavily on house building revival

Outlook

Tony May

IT'S AN old tune now: the housing market is poised to recover. For the past six years the building industry has intoned that "this could be the year the industry bounces back". Historically, it has done well. In its 110-year history it has only asked the City for cash once. What troubles the Square Mile is that that cash call, for £104 million, came only last June — and the man asking for the

money was Mr Dwyer. Naturally, Wimpey will not be drawn on any plans it might have to raise cash. There is little pressure on the balance sheet, but over the past year group debt leaped from £34.5 million to £165 million, giving a debt-equity ratio of 83 per cent up from 7 per cent.

David Kilbourn, an analyst at Panmure Gordon & Co, was sceptical about the match between the Tarmac and Wimpey, businesses, and questioned Wimpey's ability to fund the large-scale land acquisitions.

So what does Mr Dwyer say? A year ago he said house sales for the first two months of 1995 were down, but he expected sales to pick up in the second half of the year. Yesterday he looked back at a year in which operating profits fell from £43.1 million to £24.9 million. Not much of a return on £408.8 million of assets employed.

He explained that the Wimpey Homes division had struggled in the face of a lack of price inflation, fierce competitiveness, discounting and reduced completions and margins.

This year Mr Dwyer aims to complete between 12,000 and 13,000 private development homes and around 1,300 units of social housing in the UK, as well as more than 1,500 homes in the US and sales of around 600 plots in Australia.

But the outlook? "The early results for January and February from all our businesses give us cautious optimism for the rest of the year." He expects low inflation, low and "probably" falling interest rates and steady economic growth. He had better be right.

that it has the quality of management to handle such a massive business effectively — especially as it has less than three years' worth of land on its books and will be among the biggest land buyers in the UK.

The group will be keen to balance its cash inflow from house sales against the huge expenditure needed for the land bank.

Historically, it has done well. In its 110-year history it has only asked the City for cash once. What troubles the Square Mile is that that cash call, for £104 million, came only last June — and the man asking for the



Creditors throw Vulkan a cash lifeline

Ian Traynor in Bremen

THE German government yesterday announced limited remedial treatment for ailing shipbuilding group Bremer Vulkan, despite signs that the group's illness may be terminal.

Following talks with company management and local politicians, the federal economics minister, Günther Rexrodt, said that Vulkan's creditors had come up with a fresh infusion of funds for the debt-ridden giant, enough to keep operations going for two months.

"The government can't guarantee it, but it looks like we've won a bit of time for structural and conceptual changes at Vulkan," Mr Rexrodt said in Bremen's city

hall. Last week, Germany's biggest shipbuilding firm declared itself insolvent and filed for protection from its creditors, while an independent audit made public on Monday found that the firm's former management had misused more than \$280 million in subsidies that were earmarked for two yards in east Germany.

Mr Rexrodt said the two yards, confronted by a liquidity crisis that must be averted, were to be separated from the parent group to prevent further abuses.

Vulkan's banks have agreed to plough in another \$36 million over the next eight weeks, said Ulrich Nölke, deputy head of the Bremen government.

Anxious Vulkan employees at the Bremen docks were

told their wages were secure for the next three months. The last few days of hectic negotiations over Vulkan's fate, with 23,000 jobs at stake, had resulted, according to local business sources, in agreement to break up the group, let parts go bankrupt and seek to revive what could be salvaged.

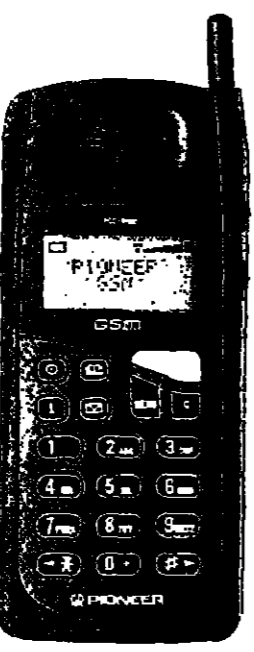
Mr Rexrodt said he hoped to see a new company rise from the ashes, possibly "in partnership" with other unnamed firms.

European Union trade officials have been fiercely critical of the Vulkan management because of the subsidies' abuse. Mr Rexrodt said talks in Brussels today should bring a "positive result" in supporting "continuing shipbuilding on the [Bremen's] River Weser".

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Racing

Dove favourite to pass Aintree test

Ken Oliver

EXTRA DOVE, who failed by a short head to Sunley Bay at Newbury earlier this month when bidding for his eighth consecutive victory, is 9-2 favourite with Hill's for Saturday's Great Yorkshire Chase at Doncaster...

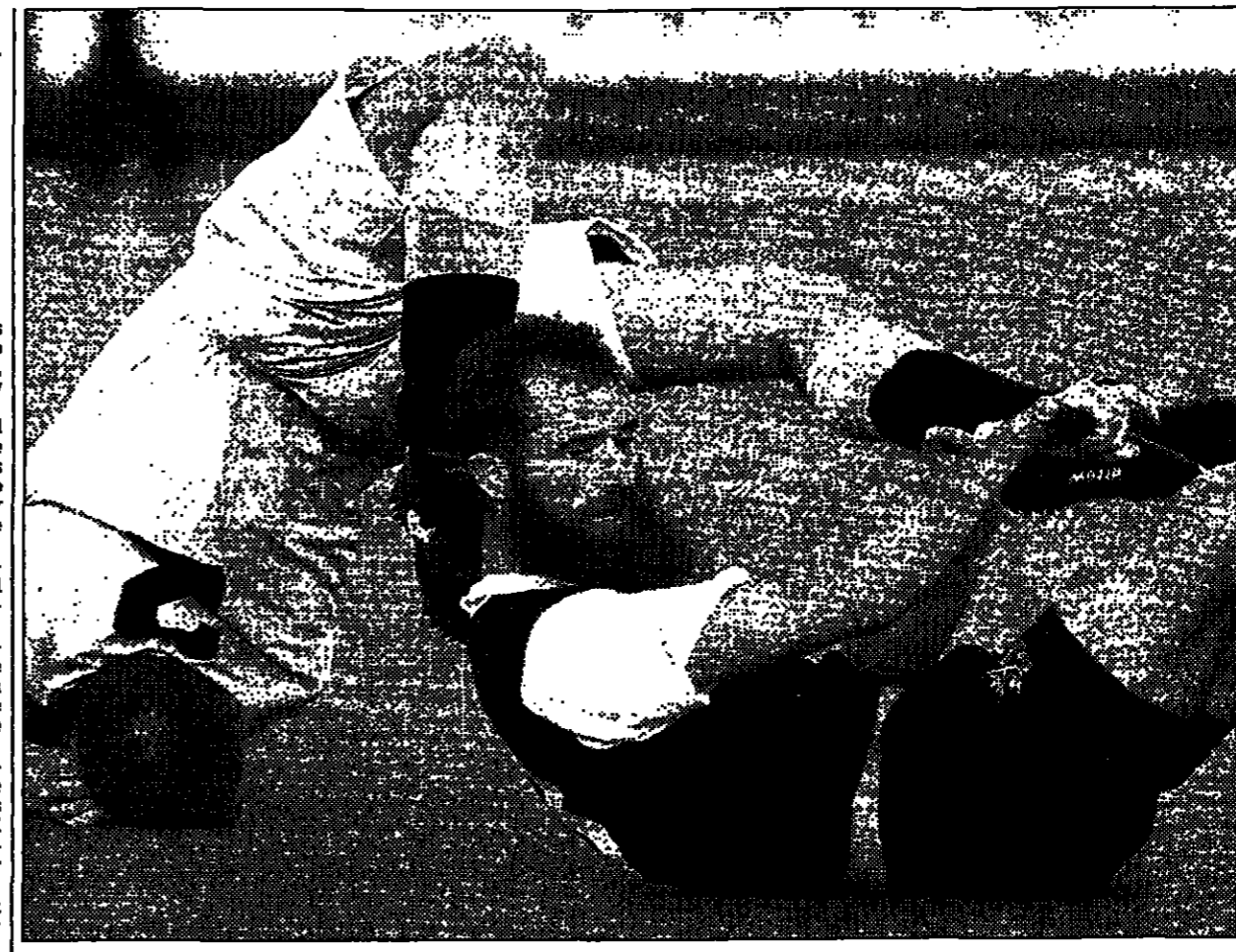
prentice Patrick McCabe to join his high-powered jockey team. Loder already has Patrick's older brother, David, on his books. David, 23, is being groomed for the apprentice title...

sponsor, Juddmonte Farms has very generously agreed to continue for one more year, for which we are extremely grateful. Phillip Mitchell, general manager of Juddmonte Farms, said: "We have always had an excellent relationship with York and are very pleased to continue for one more year."

Simon Earle, in his first full season as a trainer, has done really well with the nine-year-old, who has progressed up the handicap ratings with his seven wins. Earle has not ruled out a tilt at Aintree, but only if Extra Dove does well on Saturday...

Patrick, who was 21 on Monday, is rated as good as his brother by many experts and has ridden 63 winners, including the last two Portland Handicaps on Hello Mister. While sponsors are pulling out of racing, Juddmonte Farms, the stud owned by Khalid Abdulla, yesterday denied reports that it was cancelling its support for the group one International Stakes at York...

With overnight frost forecast, Nottingham (7.30) and Taunton (8.00) make inspections this morning. No problems are anticipated at Wetherby where Miss Optimist (2.50) holds a first rate chance in the Hochoist Panacur Novice Hurdle. David Nicholson's six-year-old ploughed through the mud at Hereford earlier this month to beat Miss Brecknell by 15 lengths and this progressive mare should follow up here. Mark Johnston's useful flat performer Celestial Key (3.50) is expected to make a winning jumping debut in the novice hurdle.



Rough and tumble... Oxford's Cope (foreground) comes out ahead of Cambridge's Harding in yesterday's 98th University hockey match at Reading. The Dark Blues won 4-1, their sixth successive victory in the fixture. PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

Boxing

Schulz camp to sue IBF

Axel Schulz's manager is to sue the International Boxing Federation over its decision to deny the German an immediate rematch with Frans Botha. The South African heavyweight tested positive for steroids after defeating Schulz in a title bout in December.

Wilfried Sauerland said he would file suit in New Jersey and declared: "My lawyers expect the IBF to be knocked out of court in the first round." On Saturday the IBF, fined Botha \$25,000, decided that he could not wear his crown but ordered him to give Schulz a rematch within 180 days. The winner was then to fight Michael Moorer.

On Monday, however, the IBF said an agreement bound the December winner to fight Moorer by June 9. It ruled that Botha, as champion, must fight the American first, leading Schulz's camp to move to have Botha disqualified.

Wetherby with guide to recent form

Table of racing results for Wetherby, including race numbers, names of horses, and their finishing positions.

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Wolverhampton (All-weather Flat)

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Results

Table of racing results for Catterick, including race numbers, names of horses, and their finishing positions.

Table of racing results for Leicester, including race numbers, names of horses, and their finishing positions.

Taunton runners and riders

Table of racing results for Taunton, including race numbers, names of horses, and their finishing positions.

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Nottingham programme

Table of racing results for Nottingham, including race numbers, names of horses, and their finishing positions.

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Soccer

FA Cup, fifth-round replay: Port Vale 1, Leeds United 2

McAllister shoots down valiant Vale

David Lacey
GARY McALLISTER last night ended Port Vale's dream of a place in the FA Cup quarter-finals for the first time in 42 years and kept alive Leeds United's hopes of two Wembley appearances this season.

form than the fact that the combination of a cup run and postponements had restricted the team to four league matches in eight weeks. In fact they were unbeaten in 11 games and had lost only two in 19.

left-back's challenge, in the 37th the roars broke out again, this time in earnest. McCarthy, resuming normal duties on the right flank, drove the ball low into the middle where three Leeds defenders were waiting. However, none of them could prevent Naylor darting in to prod Port Vale ahead with a cheeky shot through Lukic's legs.

First Division: Crystal Palace 3, Birmingham City 2

Dyer provides the fire

Martin Thorpe
WHATEVER Harry's game is at Crystal Palace, it is working well. Since Basset took over five games ago, his new side have won three and lost just one.

night's game, but Barry Fry refused. However, the player got his wish after turning up late at Selhurst Park, pumping Fry to fine him two weeks' wages and declare him not in the right frame of mind to take the field.

Gordon shooting just wide. Then Dyer, Freedman and combined well to create all sorts of openings for Fry against the bar. But there was no referee's whistle and the Palace central defender Davies slammed the loose ball into the net from close range.



Thomas on top... the 28-year-old celebrates his goal at Blackburn and will be hoping to repeat the trick tonight TOM JORDAN

Doubts clearing as Liverpool give Thomas run of Anfield

Charlton must beware the midfielder with a line in vital-goals, writes Cynthia Bateman

WHERRAS Ian Rush has announced he is to leave Liverpool after they refused to offer him the two-year deal he was seeking. Michael Thomas has been disappointed, and the player remains on the week-to-week arrangement he has had since his contract finished in the summer.

tenders Charlton will be aware that when Thomas scores, his goals tend to change the course of history.

But only got a game now and again. "But I have never lost belief in myself. I know I'm good enough to hold down a regular place. I'm in my prime now so I don't want to be sitting in the reserves. But if I can keep playing like I am at the moment then surely the manager can't leave me out."

Southend 0, Sunderland 2

Scott gives Southend attack of the vapours

Paul Weaver
SUNDERLAND climbed into second place in the First Division for the first time this year at fog-bound Roots Hall last night.

from Rammell, making his home debut, and Given had to make a sharp save. However, the game's involvement had been confined to nonchalantly tipping over a half-hearted volley from Halls after Marsh's free-kick had been only partially cleared.

bringing down Howey. Sunderland did not count their penalties until they have taken five. This is not a good sign for the team. The Eagles finally feathered their nest 10 minutes after the break. The full-back Edworthy lifted an up and under into six-yard box, Ndah jumped with Griemink and under suspension of a foul on the goalkeeper, he was able to strike the bar. But there was no referee's whistle and the Palace central defender Davies slammed the loose ball into the net from close range.

Results

Table with 2 columns: Match details and Score. Includes FA Cup Fifth-round replay (Port Vale 1, Leeds United 2) and First Division results (Crystal Palace 3, Birmingham City 2).

Table with 2 columns: Match details and Score. Includes First Division results (Southend 0, Sunderland 2) and Second Division results (Barnet 1, Luton 1).

Table with 2 columns: Match details and Score. Includes Football League Trophy results (Barnet 1, Luton 1) and Non-League results (Barnet 1, Luton 1).

Table with 2 columns: Match details and Score. Includes Basketball results (Boston 118, Indiana 122) and Billiards results (Wright 5-1, O'Shea 5-1).

Table with 2 columns: Match details and Score. Includes Fixtures for various sports like Soccer, Rugby Union, and Basketball.

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Table with 2 columns: Match details and Score. Includes First Division results (Barnet 1, Luton 1) and Second Division results (Barnet 1, Luton 1).

Table with 2 columns: Match details and Score. Includes Football League Trophy results (Barnet 1, Luton 1) and Non-League results (Barnet 1, Luton 1).

Table with 2 columns: Match details and Score. Includes Basketball results (Boston 118, Indiana 122) and Billiards results (Wright 5-1, O'Shea 5-1).

Table with 2 columns: Match details and Score. Includes Fixtures for various sports like Soccer, Rugby Union, and Basketball.

Branco gets a job at Boro

Neil Robinson

MIDDLESBROUGH yesterday became the first English club to have two Brazilians on their books when the Department for Education and Employment finally granted Branco a work permit.

The decision delighted his compatriot Juninho, already at Middlesbrough, and encouraged West Ham and Everton, whose requests for work permits for Romania's Ilie Dumitrescu and the Swiss Marc Hottiger have been rejected. Neither fulfils the strict criteria laid down by the department, but nor does Branco, and both clubs will now point to the Brazilian as evidence that the rules can be bent if not broken.



Branco... permit granted

Sport in brief

Snooker
Stephen Hendry showed that his surprise second-round defeat in last week's International Open was merely an off day by convincingly beating Neal Foulds 5-1 to reach the last 16 of the European Open in Malta yesterday, writes Chris Eberton.

Golf

The PGA European Tour has announced a new tournament, the Oki Pro-Am, to be played at La Morejuela in Madrid from October 10-13.

JAVICO LTD

WORLD CUP CRICKET

Group A: India v Australia

Waugh silences India's big guns

Derek Grundy in Bombay

IT HAD been billed as Tendulkar v Warne, but in the event the first genuine heavyweight contest of the World Cup turned out to be a gripping Tendulkar v Waugh, Mark, affair.

Table with columns for batsmen and bowlers, showing runs, wickets, and overs for both teams.

Match performance left India facing an awkward quarter-final against either South Africa or Pakistan.

A game of dramatic fluctuations and surprises unfolded on a day when Indian fielding produced five run-outs must count as extraordinary.

For a while it had seemed that Sachin Tendulkar would win the match off his own bat. Undaunted by the fall of his first two partners in the opening six overs he rode his luck

in a daring innings of 90, smacked off 84 balls with 14 fours and a six.

Warne was the only bowler to command any respect from Tendulkar: there was a suspicion that the prodigy did not always "pick" Warne, who took only one wicket but turned the ball prodigiously and applied the screws with 10 overs for only 28 runs.

When Tendulkar was eventually stumped with the score on 143, chasing the wide one from Waugh, he and Sanjay Manjrekar had added 72 in 16 overs for the fourth wicket.

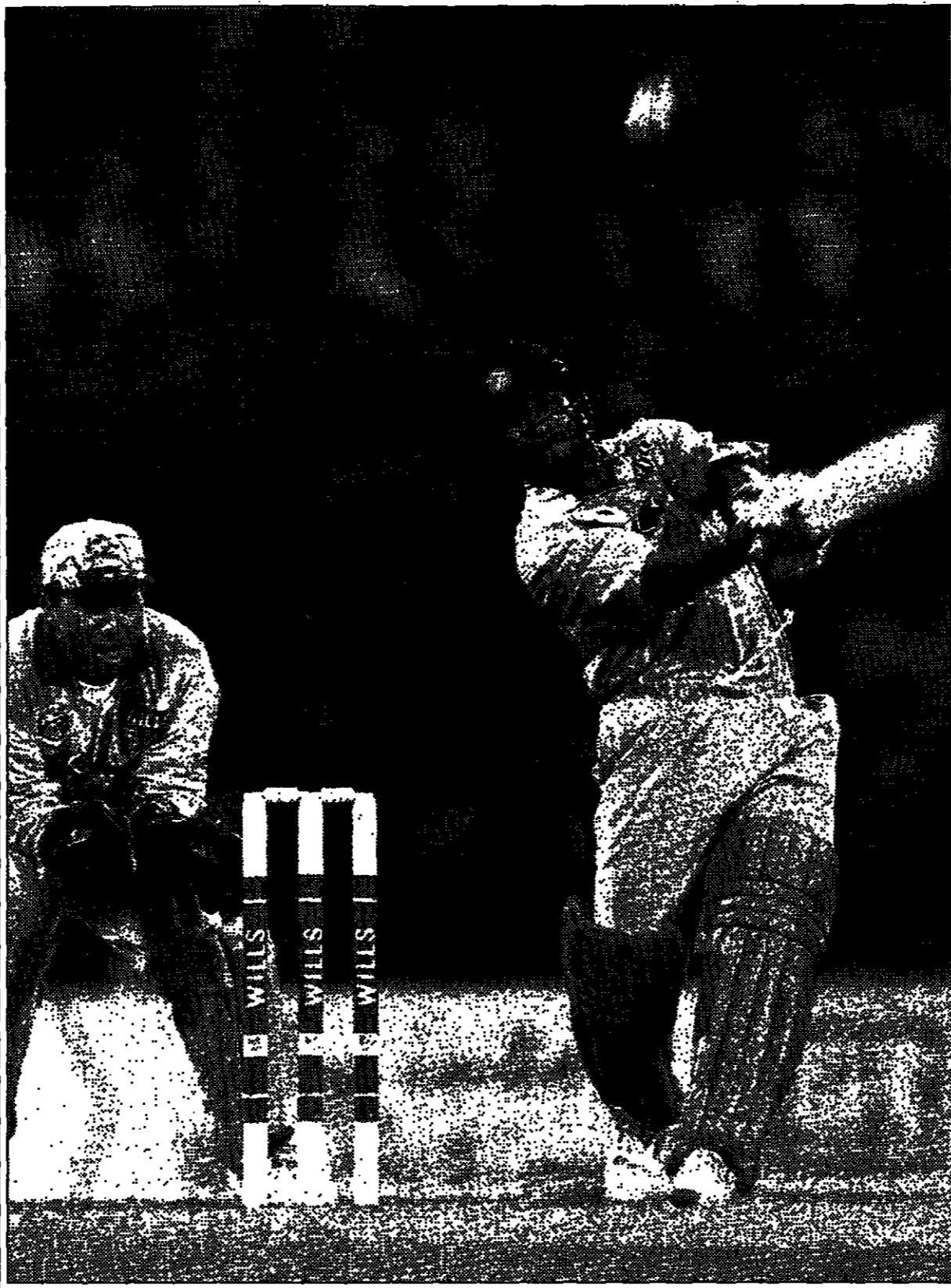
Home hopes dipped as Manoj Prabhakar again did not fit the role of a No. 6, but Manjrekar and the little wicketkeeper Nayan Mongia, who made an impish 27 as the pair added 58 in 10 overs, refused to concede defeat.

India were always struggling when Manjrekar, the last recognised batsman, was seventh out with 54 runs wanted and 52 balls available. But even when the ninth wicket fell off the first ball of the 47th over on 231, the result was by no means certain until Fleming capped his World Cup debut with a good one to bowl Kumble.

Australia perhaps should not even have been within range. Having won the toss, Mark Taylor launched the world leave been at least Taylor, who biffed the ball heartily off the back foot to score 89 off 73 balls, took the bulk of the strike while Waugh batted as if the plan was for him to stick around.

Even while seven fielders were confined to the circle, Waugh never tried to loft the ball. With nimble footwork he was always poised to find the gaps with curving strokes and even later when he hit the ball high it was only to strike his three sixes.

With a big total on offer Australia could only make 258, because once Waugh was run out for 126 off 135 balls he was left with some suicidal runs in the final five overs, during which they lost a further six wickets for 26 runs. The India bowling on a pitch of variable pace — being used for the first time — was pretty plain and not at all accurate. But by their standards the Indians fielded superbly and took every chance that came their way. Manjrekar's one-handed catch at backward point from a searing square cut by Ricky Ponting being quite outstanding.



Masterstroke... Tendulkar lets fly during his brilliant innings of 90 against Australia. PHOTOGRAPH: SHAWN BUTTERILL

Zimbabwe's Strang arm destroys African rivals

FIGHTING broke out in the crowd at the all-Africa match in Patna but there were few alarms on the field as Zimbabwe exerted their Test-playing authority in beating Kenya.

Kenya were dismissed for 134 with two balls of their 50 overs remaining, and although Zimbabwe made heavy weather of the chase they eventually won by five wickets with 7.4 overs remaining.

Sent to bat, Kenya collapsed after a steady start saw them reach 60 for one. Four wickets fell in the space of seven runs and 32 balls and then the leg-spinner Paul Strang took all the remaining wickets to end with a career-best five for 21 in 9.4 overs.

"I was lucky today," Strang said. "I bowled some loose stuff early on and I could have gone all over the park. But when they did try to play some big shots they got out."

"I love the wickets here. It turns and bounces a lot more on the pitches here."

The opener Deepak Chudasama (34) and the captain Maurice Odumbe (30) were the major contributors to Kenya's score. Zimbabwe were

given a strong start by Andy Waller (30 off 32 balls) and Andy Flower (45) but then fell to 113 for five.

New Zealand crushed the United Arab Emirates by 109 runs in the day's other game, at Faisalabad, to claim a place in the quarter-finals.

Roger Twose, the Devonian turned New Zealander, narrowly missed out on his maiden one-day international century. The former Warwickshire left-hander made 92 off 112 balls.

Craig Spearman scored a forceful 78 from 77 balls to help New Zealand pile up an unbeatable 276 for eight in an innings reduced to 47 overs after a rain delay.

Johanne Samarsekera, batting at No. 8, made a vain but valiant unbeaten 47 from 59 balls as the UAE struggled to 157 for nine.

Table showing match statistics for various teams, including runs, wickets, and overs.

Players caught up in cola war

Mike Selvey reports on the commercial conflict fizzing over at the World Cup

THE two great cola companies of the world have been at loggerheads for decades, locked into perhaps the deadliest rivalry in corporate history. Now the battle between "the real thing" and the one claimed to make its imitators "come alive" has spilled over into the World Cup, with some high-profile players caught in no man's land between an official sponsor and a personal one.

Coca-Cola has contributed millions of dollars to become an official sponsor of the competition and has launched a massive campaign involving television and newspaper promotions, prominent and extensive peripheral advertising, huge inflatable bottles hovering over the cricket grounds, and novelty carts in the shape of the trademark bottle wheeled on for the drinks intervals.

But its rival Pepsi-Cola has mounted a counter-attack with a series of TV advertisements featuring leading players such as Wasim Akram, Sachin Tendulkar, Mohammad Azharuddin, Courtney Walsh, Ian Bishop and Dominic Cork as well as the English umpire Dickie Bird. This has led to the conflict of interest.

During the drinks breaks in India's match against Australia yesterday it was noticeable that Tendulkar — the highest earner in the game, thanks among other ventures to a contract with Pepsi reportedly worth \$8 million (£5.2 million) — and the India captain Azharuddin were careful to dissociate themselves from the official sponsor, taking their refreshment some way from the cart.

Earlier in the week Wasim, the Pakistan captain, had been forced to ask the competition organiser P. V. Narasimha Murthy, Orient Advertising and the Pakistan Television Corporation to remove un-

authorised shots of him from a promotional video of an official World Cup song, the showing of which infringes the terms of his contract with Pepsi which lasts until the end of next year.

"The use of the song," said Wasim, "not only endangers my contract but jeopardises my credibility in the eyes of the general public. As such I do not want to associate myself with Coca-Cola in any way."

Once Pepsi realised that its rival had paid \$3.7 million to become an official sponsor, a riposte was almost inevitable and few stones have been left unturned in an attempt to make capital, with boardings outside the grounds and the distribution of T-shirts to the crowd.

Most damaging of all, Pepsi launched a TV advertising counter-campaign in which the contracted personalities are offered the official drink but shake their heads in disgust, accepting their Pepsi instead and uttering the pay-off line: "Pepsi: nothing official about it."

A complaint by Coca-Cola to P. V. Narasimha Murthy, about the activities around the grounds in particular, has met with little success, as the organisers concede reluctantly that there is little they can do about it.

In truth there were always going to be conflicts of interest once teams began to take on board their own official sponsors and as the marketability of players increased. England, for example, have their own deal with Tetley but like all teams in the tournament must not wear any other logo than that of the main tournament sponsor, Wills.

It is a situation that Tetley accept with reluctance. In the cola war, however, the participation of Cork in the rival campaign, whether through his own agent or as part of a team pool, raises the sort of ethical as well as contractual problems that the Test and County Cricket Board might have foreseen and which it and perhaps the ICC must address properly before the next World Cup.

Rugby League

Rebels play hard to get

Paul Fitzpatrick

THE one thing that now seems certain in a complex situation is that the Australian Super League will not start on Friday as planned. A ban on the Super League, in the form of an interim injunction, was confirmed in Sydney yesterday by Justice James Burchett, who has ruled the organisation illegal last Friday.

Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, backer of the Super League, has appealed for a stay of proceedings but that will not be heard until next week.

Ken Arthurson, chairman of the Australian Rugby League, is hoping that "sanity will now prevail" at a meeting of clubs called for today.

Arthurson wants all 20 clubs, those who have remained loyal to the ARL and eight "rebel" Super League clubs, to attend, but none of the rebels were at an emergency meeting yesterday.

A "boycott" was repeated the ARL's competition, also due to start on Friday, would be thrown into doubt. Arthurson remains optimistic, however. He said that confusion had been created in the minds of the public but now the matter had been clarified.

"I think once we get together... sanity will prevail and we will be able to get down to some reasonable thinking. I think our competition will go ahead as we anticipated it would."

The eight "rebel" clubs were ordered to return to the ARL under Justice Burchett's ruling last week, but could

defy the ruling by fielding weakened sides.

According to a lawyer for the ARL, however, that would leave them liable to "very, very severe" fines under the terms of loyalty agreements they signed in 1994 and 1995, which Justice Burchett has ruled are binding.

Some players could be lost to the game. The brilliant Laurie Daley, of the Canberra Raiders, is threatening to fulfil a lifetime's "burning" ambition and switch to Australian Rules Football if he cannot play Super League.

The great worry in England, meanwhile, concerns the eight-club world championship play-offs, which were to form the spectacular and lucrative finale to the first Super League seasons in Europe and Australasia.

Brian Smith, Bradford Bulls' head coach and chief executive, cannot be certain what the future holds but he was confident yesterday that the play-offs would take place.

"I would advise anyone with ideas that the world championships will not take place any secret of his diaries for their back pockets," he said.

Bradford have signed a sponsorship deal with Compaq, the computer company, worth about £150,000 a year. As part of the deal computers will analyse players' performances, using software introduced by Smith.

Warrington and Castleford are both chasing Richard Hensare, Carlisle's New Zealand three-quarter, which was confident yesterday that the play-offs would take place.

Phil Veevers is unhappy about being placed on offer at £26,000 by St Helens. The 31-year-old utility player joined Saints from Brisbane Souths in 1984 and has made 379 appearances for the club.

Basketball

England deprived of their necessities in Moscow

Christian Bright in Moscow

ENGLAND are ready to retreat from Moscow after learning that they must take on Russia in the European Championship tonight without their star player Peter Scantlebury and their outstanding player Steve Bucknall. "This leaves me paralysed," said their coach Sergio Nemeth.

Bucknall pulled out after aggravating a groin strain in the process of scoring 24 points for the London Towers against Worthing Bears on Sunday. Scantlebury's eye injury, sufficiently improved to enable him to play for the Thames Valley Tigers on Sunday, nevertheless required another doctor's appointment yesterday.

Nemeth was livid. "We didn't have too much of a chance to start with. Now what chance do we have?" Nemeth was prevented from calling up replacements because visas would not have been issued at such short notice. Roger Huggins, the

England Player of the Year, takes over as captain.

If it was the Russian food which dissuaded the two key players from accepting their team-mates on Monday's flight from Gatwick, they need not have worried. "This is the first time it's been edible," the team manager Mick Byrne commented.

Neither player has ever made any secret of his dislike for eastern European. Bucknall was missing from previous trips to Poland and Latvia and Scantlebury recalls England's last trip to Moscow with extreme distaste.

It is not Ken Brown's favourite place either but the Leopards guard has taken the precaution of bringing his own food — cans and boxes of tuna, sardines, cream crackers, baked beans, German hot dogs and pot noodles. "I've got a good stomach," he explained, "but I am very particular about how the stuff is prepared and laid out."

ENGLAND: Austin, Gardner (London Towers); B Baker, Brown, White (Warrington); Stone (Derby); Veevers (Newcastle).

Squash

Parke back for British Open

SIMON PARKE, the No. 1 player in England's world title-winning team in November, has successfully finished a course of chemotherapy for testicular cancer, diagnosed two months ago, writes Richard Jago.

Parke, the world No. 5, has entered the British Open in Cardiff in the first week in April and expects to play in what will be the world's leading tournament. "I have

started playing again this week and I think I can compete to a good standard in the British Open. I am expecting too much for me to be at my best," he said.

Parke's former team-mate Peter Marshall, who reached last year's British Open final, has not entered the tournament this time, having competed little in the past 10 months because of chronic fatigue syndrome.

Rugby Union

Jones the medic is a tonic for Wales

Civid Plummer on the rapid rise of the flanker with a big Saturday job in Dublin

SIX weeks ago Gwyn Jones was a name little known in rugby circles outside Wales. When he made his international debut against Italy in January the photographs sent out to the media bore the caption "Rhodri Jones".

There is a Rhodri Jones playing first-class rugby in Wales — the brother of the huge Wales lock Derwyn, that Rhodri packs down in the back five for Aberavon — but after three impressive international appearances against Italy, England and Scotland, nobody calls Rhodri Gwyn Jones "Rhodri Jones" any more.

Jones is a traditional break-away flanker in the Josh

Kronfeld mould but he is more resolute in defence than the New Zealander. At 6ft and 15 stone he is small alongside some of the brutes in present-day international back rows, but his primary asset is not so much his pace as his anticipation, his ability to materialise at crucial moments in defence as well as attack. Now that Wales have rediscovered the virtues of width, Jones is an unassuming but essential cog in his side's same plan.

He is a throwback in another way. In an era of full-time players, the 23-year-old is a fourth year student at the University of Wales College of Medicine, sitting exams every two months and due to take

his finals in the summer of 1997 when the Lions will be touring South Africa on their first professional tour.

Jones is following his parents into medicine — Alan and Emyll Jones are both GPs in Swansea — but recognises that he will probably have to make a choice between his career off the field and rugby.

"It is not a question of money," he said. "Medicine is not a badly paid profession and rugby does not compare in terms of potential income. I am having the best of both worlds at the moment and, as long as my studies last, there is no question of my becoming a full-time rugby player."

"Making money as a rugby player has never been something which has concerned me. The reason I play is because I enjoy the game, though I suppose I was not

saying that last season after being sidelined for nine months following a shoulder operation.

"Where trying to combine a career in medicine and rugby could be difficult is if all the top players become professional. Trying to compete as a part-timer, both in terms of competing against your rivals for a place in the Wales team and of acquiring yourself well on the rugby field, would undoubtedly be difficult.

"Things are changing by the week, but so far I can marry the demands of both."

It means Jones has little spare time, however. He lives in Cardiff, is currently gaining practical experience in the Royal Gwent Hospital in Newport, and travels to Llanelli for training twice a week — staying loyal to the club who stood by him during his



Jones... great anticipation

Guscott gives Wigan games firm hand-off

BATH's England centre Jeremy Guscott will boycott two proposed games against the rugby league champions Wigan in May, writes David Irwin.

Yesterday he dismissed the idea of the cross-code challenge as "a pointless exercise".

Guscott said: "They would thrash us at league and we would thrash them at union. I am sure someone could come up with a better idea, some sort of compromise. As it stands now I, for one, will not be playing."

Orrrell, Bath's Courage League One rivals, are to help their neighbours Wigan prepare for the games. Peter Williams, Orrrell's director of rugby, confirmed that his pair will be working with Wigan on their line-out and scrummaging plays.

Handwritten text in a box at the bottom of the page, possibly a signature or note.

Branco free to join Middlesbrough, page 14
The resurgence of Michael Thomas, page 14

Tendulkar's brilliance all in vain, page 15
Judge puts Super League on hold, page 15

SportsGuardian

MASTER MARKSMAN ANNOUNCES THE LEAVING OF LIVERPOOL AFTER 16 YEARS

An Anfield era is about to end. Ian Ross looks back over its spectacularly striking success

Rush seeking new goals

AN RUSH's irresistible relationship with Liverpool will end in a free transfer this summer. The man widely acknowledged as the finest British striker of his generation is to leave the Merseyside club after 16 years of remarkable achievement and success.

The 34-year-old Welsh international announced his decision yesterday after spending the past few weeks pondering precisely where he would like to be when the curtain finally descends on a famous career.

"My heart is still here, but Liverpool and probably always will be, but the bottom line is that I am a professional footballer and I must look to the future," he said, with the deep regret of one about to end a glorious love affair.

Rush has decided to abandon his attempts to reclaim the first-team berth he so reluctantly surrendered to Stan Collymore this season. Even so, he conceded yesterday that in an ideal world he would have liked to remain at Anfield until his retirement from playing.

"I have always said that I would like to finish here, but it's not to be," he said. "Clearly the time to move on has arrived; I must look to the future and so must Liverpool."

Rush's departure will signal the end of an era at the most successful club in the history of British football, as he is the only member of the current Liverpool squad to have been signed by Bob Paisley, who died this month.

Paisley described Rush as a "rough diamond" when he bought him from Chester for only £300,000 in May 1980. The striker's potential was swiftly realised and 18 months ago he surpassed Roger Hunt's tally of 265 senior goals to become Liverpool's all-time leading scorer.

As with all sportsmen of impeccable pedigree the statistics speak for themselves. In 649 appearances for Liverpool, Rush has scored 345 goals — 228 in the league, 38 in the FA Cup, 48 in the League Cup, 20 in European fixtures, three in Charity Shields and seven others.

He is also Wales's all-time record scorer with 28 goals in 72 internationals.

Among his many club feats are the five Wembley goals — four against Everton — that make him the leading individual scorer in FA Cup finals. His sense of occasion was also highlighted when he struck a hat-trick on his 600th Liverpool appearance in a Coca-Cola Cup win over Blackburn last season.

Rush has left Liverpool once before, joining Juventus in a £3.3 million deal, only to return in 1987 after an unfulfilling season in Italy.

Although Rush has spent the past few months discussing the prospect of a new contract with Liverpool's manager Roy Evans, he could not reach agreement simply because the club were not prepared to offer him the two-year deal he is seeking.

"I do believe that I have two good years in me and I want to spend those two years playing first-team football," he said. "I am confident that I can do a good job, that I can score goals for somebody, somewhere."

"Liverpool have been great to me and we have now reached an amicable arrangement. I will stay on here until the end of the season and then decide what to do. With the transfer deadline coming up next month I was anxious to go, but I do appreciate Liverpool's situation."

"It would have been easy for me to stay on the substitutes' bench and to keep on taking the money, but I'm not like that."

Rush may have entered the twilight of his career but there will be no shortage of takers for a player who actually weighs less now than when he joined Liverpool. Indeed, over the past nine months no fewer than 14 clubs at home and abroad have attempted to lure him away from Anfield.

Rush will demand a signing-on fee of around £200,000 — 10 pages of at least £3,000 a week. Even so, he is likely to find himself very much in demand.

"Where can you find someone to replace Ian Rush?" asked Evans yesterday. "I don't want to lose him but he wants regular first-team football, and, bearing in mind his stature and ability, that is perfectly understandable."



Still lean and hungry... Ian Rush, now 34, believes he can go on playing for another two years. PHOTOGRAPH: STUART FRANKLIN

Defiance left on a cutting room floor



Vincent Hanna

GEORGE the green-grocer and military historian is in a huff — but it's not Mike Atherton's fault. George is a former soldier. To hear him in the pub you'd swear he took Caen single-handed. Actually he was a sapper; he was invalided out when he accidentally blew a hole in a British parade ground near Hanover and then fell into it.

But George understands the English character and is forever the optimist. He arrived in the shed on Sunday when England were 98 for seven.

"We're lulling the South Africans into a false sense of security," he said confidently. "Just watch Atherton stage another rearguard action. He'll bat through tomorrow and get a draw."

I pointed out that it was a one-day match, and besides Atherton was already out for a duck. George pondered this. "Do you know they've deliberately given us bad practice facilities?" he snapped. "Anyway I'll be queuing up for the new video tomorrow." He slammed the shed door after him.

A quick word about the shed. Because of terrible snow in Kent we have had power cuts. Since the shed has a storage heater it remains warm for a long time. Facing hypothermia, my wife sought all-party talks and I've been able to renegotiate minimal sports-viewing rights in the house. They cover soccer and rugby only. Cricket is still barred.

GEORGE was back on the phone yesterday. "Good old Atherton!" he said. "He sorted out Illingworth, didn't he? It was an understandable mistake. Hearing Mike cry 'Somebody get that buffoon out of here', after the South African game, raised our hopes that he meant the manager. Alas, Mike had again ignored the central tenet of every English cricket captain's code: when in a hole stop digging."

Talking about Raymond Illingworth: to paraphrase Fanny Ashdown on the Scott report, can you think of any other organisation in Britain, except perhaps British Gas, attempted to secure the listed events for terrestrial channels.

where a senior executive with a record like his would be allowed to hang on to his job? Instead, it's poor old Atherton who is holed up in his room.

My feelings there because cricket does not command mass support. If he managed the England football team he would have been shot months ago. Graham Taylor went back to Watford on Saturday, they lost 2-2 and by 5 o'clock wages in the crowd were calling for his resignation.

I explained to George about the Pakistani journalist and the apology. He said it was a put-up job, and hadn't we sorted out the former match even without Ruud Gullit? He said he'd be round later with the video. I said I couldn't wait. I didn't mean it.

I am well fed up with what, until yesterday, was a farce of a cricket competition. Apart from three shiny bits from Sachin Tendulkar and the India-Australia game it has been tedious. The unextended in pursuit of the inept.

THE English cricket tradition is the antithesis of the one-day game.

The Empire was built on a foundation of character and consistency. And cricket should breed both. "If I knew that I was going to die today," said G H Hardy, "I think I should still want to hear the cricket scores." Kipling would have scorned the flashy strokes of 60-over games.

George embodies those qualities. His military stories extol the great sieges: Masada, Malta, Khartoum — "the real five-day games," he calls them. The Charge of the Light Brigade he regards as a stupid limited-overs match at Balaklava, in the middle of the Sevastopol Test.

Yesterday George arrived with his new video, Atherton's Innings, which went on sale this week. It is a record of the siege of Johannesburg, England v South Africa 13 weeks ago. George says Mike's undefeated 185 ranks up there with Baden-Powell's 217 days at Mafeking as our country's greatest moment in Africa. For both men achieved what all great English leaders devoutly — and instinctively — desire... a draw.

It is a smartly presented package, featuring a long interview with Atherton. But George went home in a rage saying he'd "wasted £12.99 on subversive rubbish". It runs for 68 minutes of which 40 minutes is the actual Innings. Over 10 hours of heroic and boring defiance left on the cutting-room floor.

How do you expect 20th Century Fox to understand that the English love permanence more than beauty?

Sky offers £25 million to snatch the Open

RUFERT MURDOCH's satellite television company BSkyB, which last year showed Europe's Ryder Cup triumph in Rochester, New York State, is now setting its sights on golf's Open Championship.

A five-year contract worth £25 million is reported to have been offered by BSkyB. Fully aware that the BBC's current deal expires after this July's championship at Royal Lytham.

Michael Bonallack, the secretary of the Royal and Ancient Club, said yesterday: "No decision has been made yet. We are still talking to a lot of people." It had been thought that the R&A might decide to keep the Open on terrestrial television because of bigger audience figures. But Bonallack said: "We have to weigh that up against what we could do with the extra money."

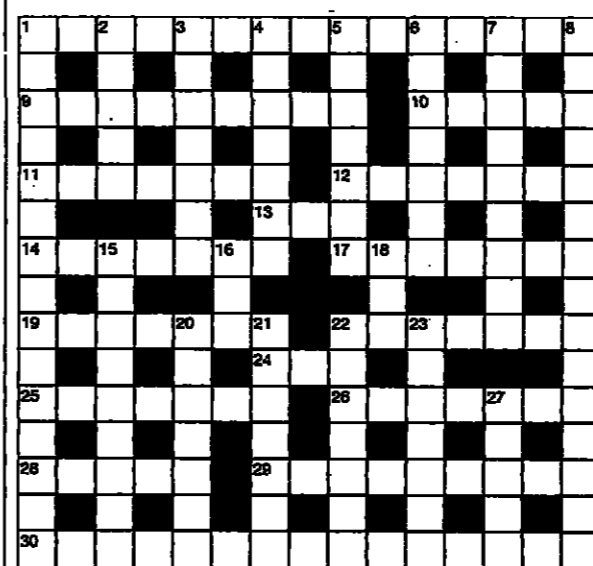
"We could put it back into golf and help a lot of people. We don't particularly want to become a listed event because that takes away our negotiating power. I'm not saying what the offers are, but we are in no hurry to make a decision."

These eight listed events, which include Wimbledon and both soccer cup finals in England and Scotland, do not include the Open. The Conservative MP and former Heritage Secretary David Mellor said on Monday that he wants the eight events protected for five years from being bought for exclusive screening by any pay-for-view television companies.

The Government was defeated in the House of Lords this month during the debate on the new Broadcasting Bill which reaches the Commons next month. An amendment introduced by Labour's former Minister for Sport Lord Howell had attempted to secure the listed events for terrestrial channels.

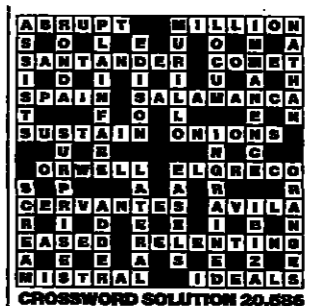
Guardian Crossword No 20,587

Set by Araucaria



- Across**
- 1 Clue to give catcall (just so) for stage show (3,5,2,5)
 - 9 Dominate one obviously in the red? (9)
 - 10 Plantagenet sign gathering dust? (5)
 - 11 Outstanding work of art turned over without falsehood? (7)
 - 12 Land turned over on a site? (7)
 - 13 See 24
 - 14 Border security could have fatal consequences? (7)
 - 17 Add spirit to double score, if put in? (7)
 - 19 Seek (and wandering either side of the border) (7)
 - 22 Type of dots in 11, badly placed in slope? (7)
 - 24, 26, 13 Sing low — threat uttered by nightingale in winter (3,7,3)
 - 25 Mechanised combat where

- sailor holds an amount of power (4,3)
 - 26 See 24
 - 28 See 8
 - 29 Delay, a kid Bruce got involved with? (9)
 - 30 Less than candid newspaper backing right answer for one with child? (15)
- Down**
- 1 Low frequency from Whitmoor Street (3,2,5,5)
 - 2 Mutton on plates in Surrey (5)
 - 3 Active personality after non-starting period (2,3,2)
 - 4 Latest fashion to be stunning to Welsh girl? (8,4)
 - 5 Royal speaker to emphasise breaking of rules? (7)
 - 6 Sort of cap worn by sainted queen or gang member? (7)
 - 7 Doubly lovey-dovey bird? (5)
 - 8, 28 People with me when Great North-Eastern's



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,587

- wrecked by greater one with warrant (7,8-5)
- 15 Potty sort of conservation? (6,3)
- 16, 18 Pass the Guardian's pretext? (6)
- 20 One, two, three letters in sequence as a minimum (2,5)
- 21 Place in Staffordshire, and partly rural Italian first? (7)
- 22 Busy creatures include small investor as well? (7)
- 23 Walk down the avenue with an unconvincing US lawyer (7)
- 27 Hint how to remove head from shellfish? (5)

Solution tomorrow
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